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NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press

Copyright, 1923
by
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First Edition, printed, June, 1923
Second printing, July, 1923
Third printing, August, 1923
Fourth printing, February, 1924
Fifth printing, August, 1924

The Knickerbocker Press
G.P. Putnam's Sons

Made in the United States of America

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The Outline of Literature

INTRODUCTION

A GREAT artist once said that for him at the heart of the religious idea was a sense of continuity, that, indeed, this sense amounted to religion. I was standing with him at the time looking over an English landscape, and on the hill-side opposite to us was an old track which generations ago had been used by ponies to carry up the daily supply of bread to the little village on the hill-top. The years have changed all that. Modern methods of transport have superseded the ponies, but the track on the hill-side can still be seen, a reminder of the unbroken continuity of life through the centuries. And one felt the force of the artist's words. It is just as when, perhaps, you are walking about London and thinking of Shakespeare's London your mind seems to be in some city not only of three hundred years ago but a thousand miles away, and then suddenly you realise that his London was this London and there has been no violent change but only a gradual shifting and growth and redistribution. And again in the thought is the very root of the religious idea. And that is the answer to anyone who may question the use of such a thing as the history of literature, as apart from the direct study of literature itself. This present OUTLINE has two functions. First, it is to give the reader something like a representative summary of the work itself that has been accomplished by the great creative minds of the world in letters. But, also, it aims at placing that work in historical perspective, showing that from the beginning until now, from the nameless poets of the earliest scriptures down to

Robert Browning, the spirit of man when most profoundly moved to creative utterance in literature has been and is, through countless manifestations, one and abiding. It aims not only at suggesting to the reader the particular quality of Homer and Shakespeare and Goethe and Thomas Hardy, but also at showing how these men and their peers, for all their new splendours of voice and gesture, are still the inheritors of an unbroken succession.

The modern reader of the poetry of, say, Mr. Ralph Hodgson, or Mr. W. H. Davies, or Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie, is doing well by himself in the mere reading. But his pleasure is the greater if at the time he dimly remembers how Mr. Hodgson's rapture flooded through the mystical poetry of the seventeenth century, and how the beautiful lyric insolence of Mr. Davies once did duty in Robert Herrick's country parsonage, and how Mr. Abercrombie is adding the stamp of his own genius to a manner known centuries ago to Lucretius and through a line of philosophical poets down to Walter Savage Landor, to whom it would have been possible for some of the readers of this OUTLINE to have spoken. Or to take another, and by the taste of to-day, a more popular example. The hungry reader of the modern novel loses nothing in his appreciation of the splendid work that is being done by so many writers in that form if upon the background of his mind there move the not too shadowy figures, fading from Dickens and Thackeray through Walter Scott and Jane Austen to Fielding and Samuel Richardson, and beyond them to Thomas Lodge and his fellow-writers of Elizabethan romance, and again beyond them to the mediæval troubadours and trouveres who told their stories by the evening firelight.

The comparison of one age's literature with that of another in point of merit is as little profitable as the comparison of one individual writer with another. The fine attitude towards art, as towards everything else, is to be grateful always for the good and beautiful thing when it comes, without grudging and without doctrinaire complaint that it is not something else. It does not help anybody to say that eighteenth century English poetry is inferior to that of the seventeenth century, or that Fielding was a better novelist than Meredith. All these things alike are the great glories of a race, the one as honourably to be kept in memory as another. But it does help appreciation to know what was the relation of eighteenth to seventeenth century poetry, and what was the line of descent by which Meredith came from Fielding. Such knowledge makes us remember always that however great the hero of our worship, he is but one figure in an organic whole which is yet greater than he. We may, for example, put Shakespeare with justice above all our own writers, but we remember that the very secret of his honour is that he stands so proudly at the head of a story so wonderful.

To know intimately the whole literature even of one language is beyond the industry of a lifetime. But here in this OUTLINE are working a number of men whose devotion has been to many branches of the art in many tongues. Together they hope to present, in a simple form that has authority, brief annals of the most living record of the soul of man. It is an enterprise which must have the blessing of many for whom the way of life has made reading necessarily haphazard and fragmentary, but who are none the less alert to the beauty of every true book.

John Drinkwater

I

THE FIRST BOOKS IN THE WORLD

THE FIRST BOOKS IN THE WORLD

§ 1

THE history of literature really begins long before men learned to write. Dancing was the earliest of the arts. Man danced for joy round his primitive camp fire after the defeat and slaughter of his enemy. He yelled and shouted as he danced, and gradually the yells and shouts became coherent and caught the measure of the dance, and thus the first war song was sung. As the idea of God developed, prayers were framed. The songs and the prayers became traditional and were repeated from one generation to another, each generation adding something of its own.

As man slowly grew more civilised, he was compelled to invent some method of writing by three urgent necessities. There were certain things that it was dangerous to forget, and which therefore had to be recorded. It was often necessary to communicate with persons who were some distance away, and it was necessary to protect one's property by marking tools, cattle, and so on, in some distinctive manner. So man taught himself to write, and having learned to write purely for utilitarian reasons, he used this new method for preserving his war-songs and his prayers. Of course, among these ancient peoples, there were only a very few individuals who learned to write, and only a few who could read what was written.

The earliest writing was merely rude scratchings on rocks, and it is supposed that these rock inscriptions were traced by a scribe, and then actually cut by a stonecutter, who probably had no idea of the meaning. Presently, man began to write with a stylus on baked clay tablets. Specimens of these clay books were discovered in Chaldea. One of them is now in the British Museum, and is an account of the Flood. George Smith found this tablet in 1872 in Koyunjik. This is probably the oldest existing example of writing. It was inscribed about the year 4000 B.C., and there is reason to believe that the Hebrews founded the story of the Flood in the Book of Genesis on the Chaldean narrative written thousands of years before the Bible. The Chaldeans used what are called cuneiform characters. The word "cuneiform" is derived from the Latin *cuneus,* which means a wedge. Each character is composed of a wedge or a combination of wedges written from left to right with a square-pointed stylus.

Scribes and Priests

The Chaldean scribes were in the pay of the Court. When the king went to war, the scribe was an important member of his staff. It was his business to note the number of cities captured, the number of enemies killed, and the amount of the spoils, and, incidentally, to accent the prowess of the king. The priests who wrote the Chaldean religious literature also received salaries from the royal treasury. In addition to war records and prayers, Chaldean clay tablets have been found dealing with agriculture, astrology, and politics. It has been suggested that the clay tablets discovered by Smith and other archæologists were part of the library of Sennacherib at Nineveh. Sennacherib died in the year 681 B.C.

Egyptian literature is next to the Chaldean in antiquity. The Egyptian books were written on papyrus, a material made from the pith of a reed that grew in the valley of the Nile, with a reed pen made from the stalk of grasses, or from canes and bamboos. The earliest Egyptian book of which we know, *The*

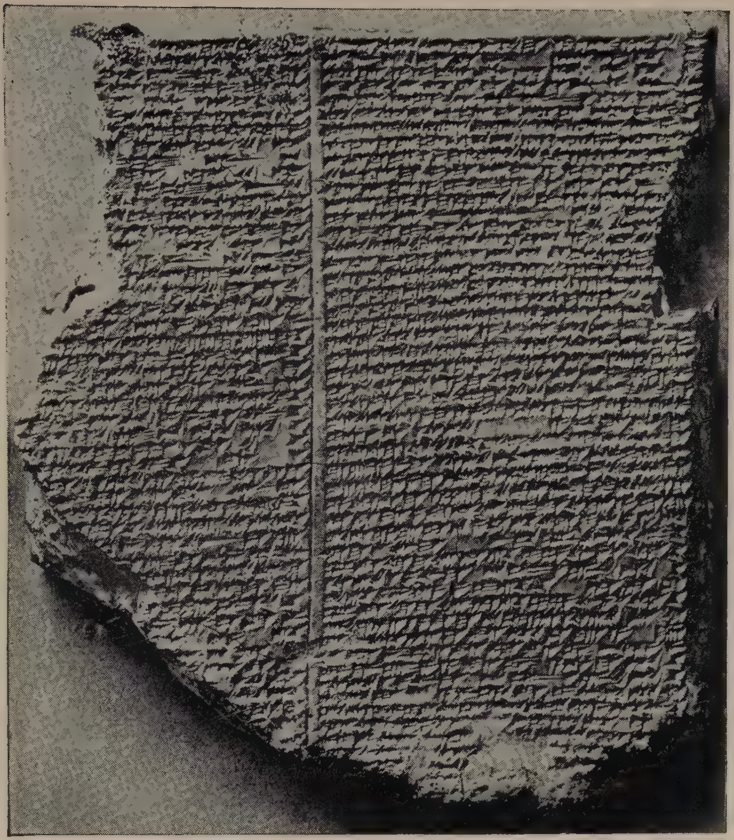
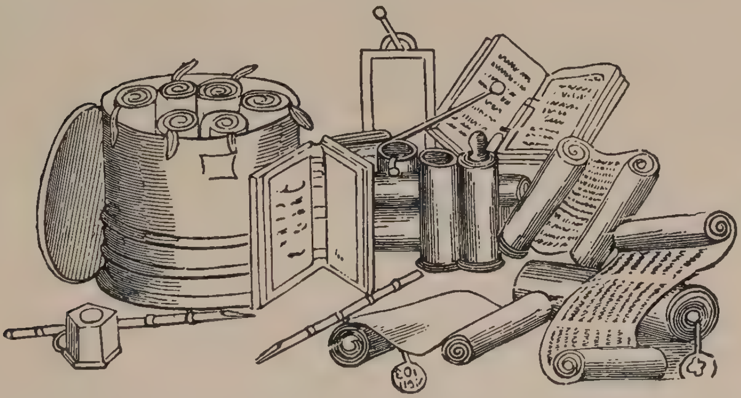


Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

PORTION OF THE STORY OF THE DELUGE, FROM A TABLET WHICH PROBABLY BELONGED TO THE PALACE LIBRARY AT NINEVEH



THIS ENGRAVING, TAKEN FROM A DRAWING IN GELL'S *Pompeiana*, CONSISTS OF A UNION OF ALL THE IMPLEMENTS OF WRITING, COLLECTED FROM A GREAT NUMBER OF ANCIENT PAINTINGS IN POMPEII AND HERCULANEUM

On the left is a circular wooden or metal case, with a lid, containing six books or volumes rolled up and labelled, each according to its contents, so as to be easily distinguished. Below this lies a *stylus* and a pentagonal inkstand. In the centre is a pen made of reed, and called a *calamus*. Next to the case of books is the *tabella* or *tabulæ*, joined together as with hinges, and sometimes, perhaps always, covered with wax. Another sort is hung up above this, where the stylus serves as a pin to suspend it against the wall. A sort of thick book of tablets, open, lies to the right of the last. In the centre are single volumes in cases. On the right are four volumes, lying in such a manner as to want no explanation, two of which have their titles, one attached to the *papyrus* itself, and the other from the *umbilicus* or cylinder of wood in its centre.

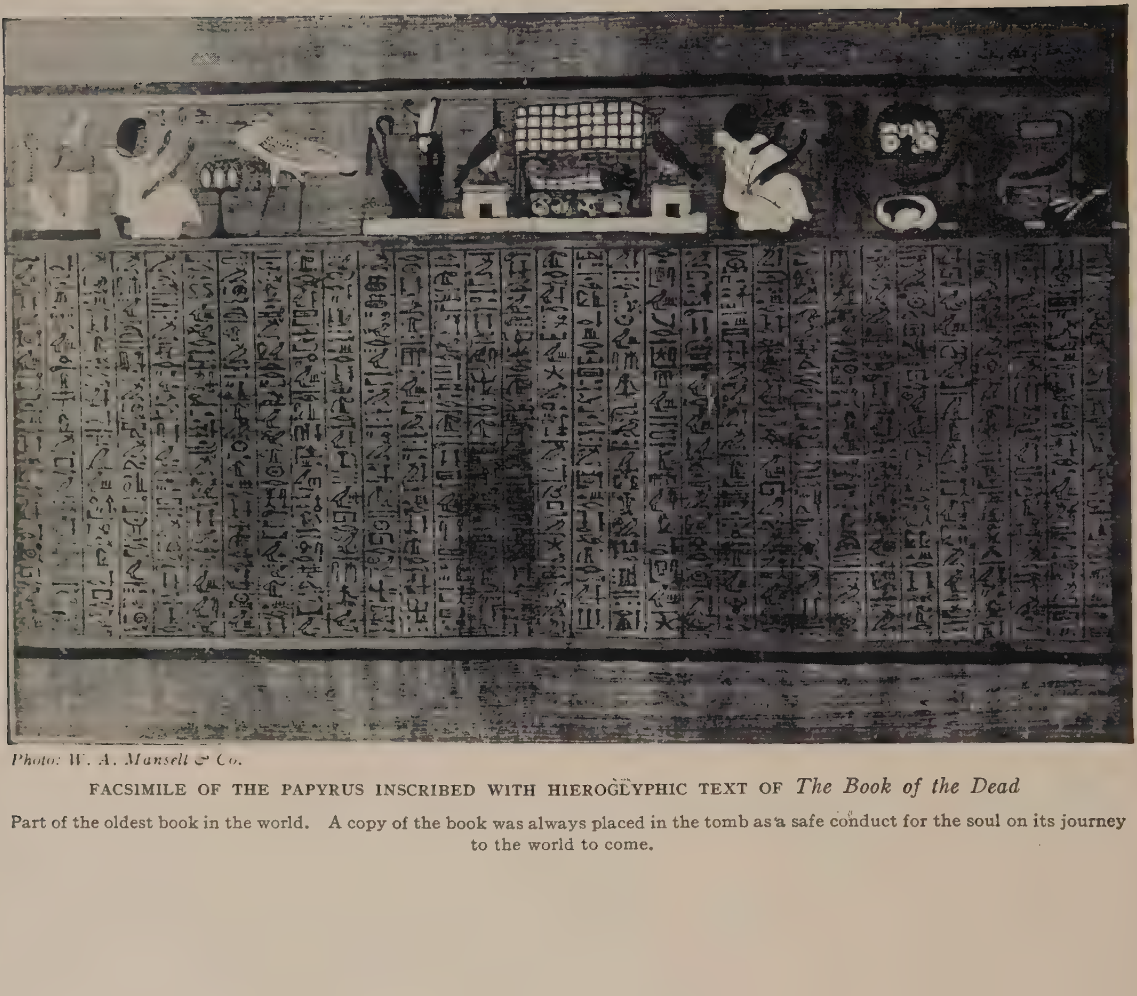


Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

FACSIMILE OF THE PAPYRUS INSCRIBED WITH HIEROGLYPHIC TEXT OF *The Book of the Dead*

Part of the oldest book in the world. A copy of the book was always placed in the tomb as a safe conduct for the soul on its journey to the world to come.

Book of the Dead, was written at the time of the building of the Great Pyramid. A copy of *The Book of the Dead* is in the British Museum. Mr. G. H. Putnam describes it as "consisting of invocations to the deities, psalms, prayers, and the descriptions of experiences that awaited the spirit of the departed in the world to come, experiences that included an exhaustive analysis of his past life and his final judgment for his life hereafter."

The Book of the Dead is a sort of ritual, and a copy of the book was always placed in the tomb as a safe conduct for the soul on its journey to the world to come. On account of this custom the ancient Egyptian undertakers are, as Mr. Putnam says, the first booksellers known to history. In Egypt the literary idea flourished in the temples, and among the many Egyptian gods was Thoth-Hermes, the Ibis-headed "Lord of the Hall of Books." But while much of the little of ancient Egyptian literature that has come down to us is definitely religious, there was also a Court literature in ancient Egypt and a popular literature made up of folk tales. In the centuries that followed, the Egyptians produced an extensive literature comprising books on religion, morals, law, rhetoric, arithmetic, mensuration, geometry, medicine, books of travel, and, above all, novels. Only a very little of this literature has been preserved, and it is probable that ancient Egyptian literature was not represented even on the shelves at Alexandria, which was entirely a Greek library.

Apart from *The Book of the Dead,* another Egyptian book, *The Precepts of Ptah-Hotep,* is probably the oldest book in the world. Ptah-Hotep was born in Memphis and he lived about the year 2550 B.C.[1]

The immense age of this oldest book but one may be realised if it be remembered that it was written two thousand years before Moses and two thousand years before the compilation of the Indian Vedas. It is two thousand five hundred years older than Homer and Solomon's Proverbs. The space of years between Solomon and ourselves is not so great as that between Solomon and Ptah-Hotep.

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[1] The authority for the date of Ptah-Hotep is *Revue Archæol.,* 1857.

The precepts were written on a papyrus 23 ft. 7 in. by 5 ft. ⅞ in., now in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris. The following is an extract from Mr. Gunn's translation:

> Cause not fear among men; for (this) the God punisheth likewise. For there is a man that saith, "Therein is life"; and he is bereft of the bread of his mouth. There is a man that saith, "Power (is therein)"; and he saith, "I seize for myself that which I perceive." Thus a man speaketh, and he is smitten down. It is another that attaineth by giving unto him that hath not. Never hath that which men have prepared for come to pass; for what the God hath commanded, even that thing cometh to pass. Live, therefore, in the house of kindliness, and men shall come and give gifts of themselves.
>
> If thou be among the guests of a man that is greater than thou, accept that which he giveth thee, putting it to thy lips. If thou look at him that is before thee (thine host), pierce him not with many glances. It is abhorred of the soul to stare at him. Speak not till he address thee; one knoweth not what may be evil in his opinion. Speak when he questioneth thee; so shall thy speech be good in his opinion. The noble who sitteth before food divideth it as his soul moveth him; he giveth unto him that he would favour—it is the custom of the evening meal. It is his soul that guideth his hand. It is the noble that bestoweth, not the underling that attaineth. Thus the eating of bread is under the providence of God; he is an ignorant man that disputeth it.
>
> If thou be an emissary sent from one noble to another, be exact after the manner of him that sent thee, give his message even as he hath said it. Beware of making enmity by thy words, setting one noble against the other by perverting truth. Overstep it not, neither repeat that which

any man, be he prince or peasant, saith in opening the heart; it is abhorrent to the soul.

§ 2

The Works of Confucius

Hundreds of years before the beginning of European literature, books had been written in China. But Confucius, the great Chinese philosopher, who flourished five hundred years before the birth of Christ, laid the foundation of Chinese literature and ethics. They were written on tablets made from bamboo fibre. Sometimes Chinese tablets were scratched with a sharp stylus, sometimes the words were painted with India ink. The Chinese also wrote books on silk. Paper was manufactured in China about 100 B.C. The Chinese began to print from solid blocks soon after the birth of Christ, and they were printing from movable type three hundred years before the invention of printing in Europe.

Early Chinese literature was ethical—the collection of traditional wisdom concerning conduct, written in order that men might live happily in this world and be prepared for a better and more satisfactory life in the world to come. The ancient Chinese writer was generally an honoured citizen, and was regarded as an important national asset, but at the beginning of the second century B.C. the Emperor Che-Hwang-ti ordered that all books should be burned except those dealing with medicine and husbandry. This Mr. Putnam says is probably "the most drastic and comprehensive policy for the suppression of a literature that the world has ever seen." Fortunately many of the ancient songs had been learned by heart and were repeated by public reciters. After the vandal emperor's death the text was again committed to writing. Though the Chinese author could not look for any income from the circulation of his books, he could rely on receiving a stipend from the State, and in no country has the government held writers and students in higher honour. In this connection it is interesting to note that one of the earliest successful women writers in the history of literature was a Chinese woman named Pan Chao, who was writing history at the beginning of the Christian era. The ancient literature of China is so extensive and so distinguished, that modern Chinese literature is little more than a series of commentaries on the works of classic authors. The influence of the classic writers on the national life has been tremendous, and it has made China in all respects the most conservative nation in the world. The Chinese respect for tradition is so great that the production of a modern literature that might rival the ancient literature is regarded as an impious impertinence, entirely unnecessary, entirely undesirable. Moreover, the devotion to the classic writers has prevented any change in the Chinese language since the dawn of history. To read a poem by Chaucer written five hundred years ago, and to note the immense difference between the English of Chaucer and the English of to-day, makes it easy to realise the extraordinary unchangeableness of the Chinese language.

The Indian *Vedas,* the sacred scriptures of the Sanscrit peoples, were written out at least a thousand years before Christ. Buddha lived towards the end of the sixth century B.C., and his teaching caused the production of an immense Indian theological literature, written either on dressed skins or prepared palm-leaves. The earliest Hebrew books were written about 1300 B.C. So far as is known there was no literature in Japan until about a thousand years ago, and in Japan, as in China and in Greece, the public reciters preceded the written book by many centuries.

The Phœnicians, the busy trading Semitic people who lived in the North of Africa, and whose capital, Carthage, was the first commercial capital of the world, first taught the Greeks how to write, and from the Egyptians the Greeks obtained their first idea of book-making. The Greek alphabet was

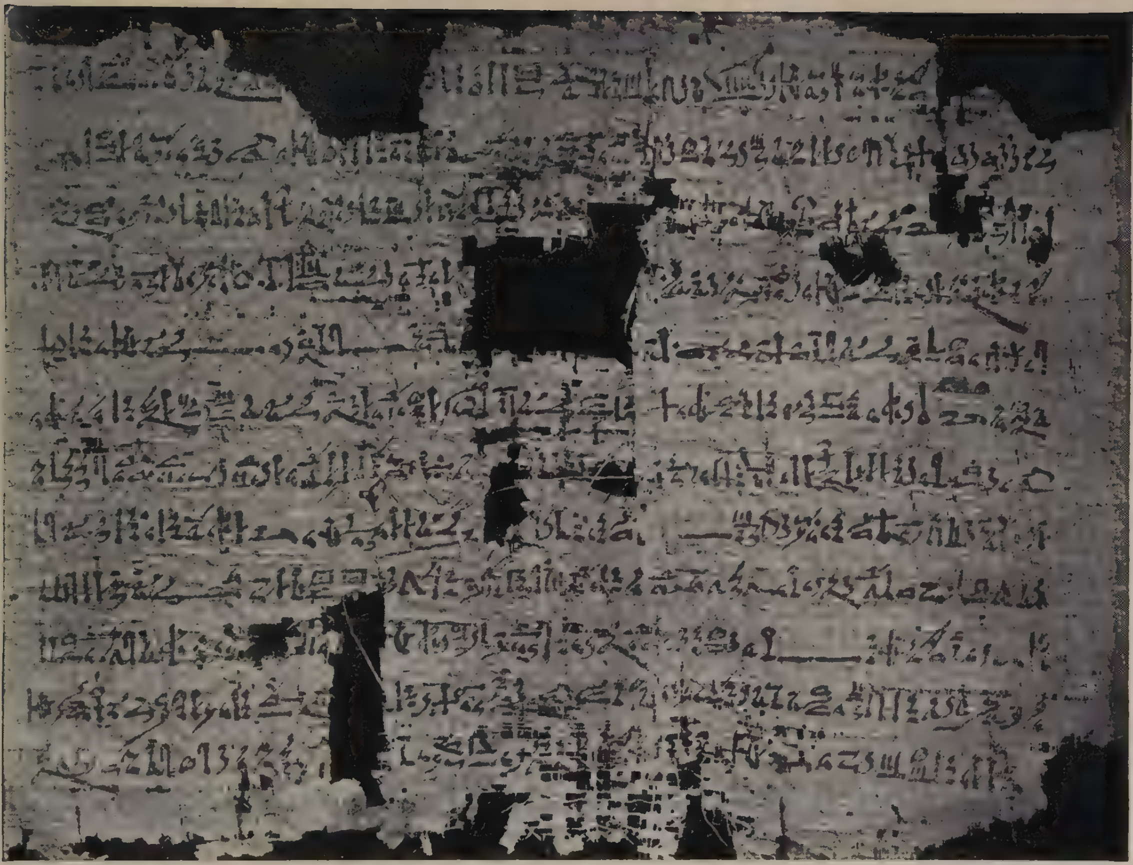

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

PAPYRUS INSCRIBED IN THE HIERATIC CHARACTER WITH AN EGYPTIAN ROMANCE AND BEARING THE NAMES OF ANTEF, ELEVENTH DYNASTY, ABOUT B.C. 2600, AND THOTHMES III, EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY, ABOUT B.C. 1600.

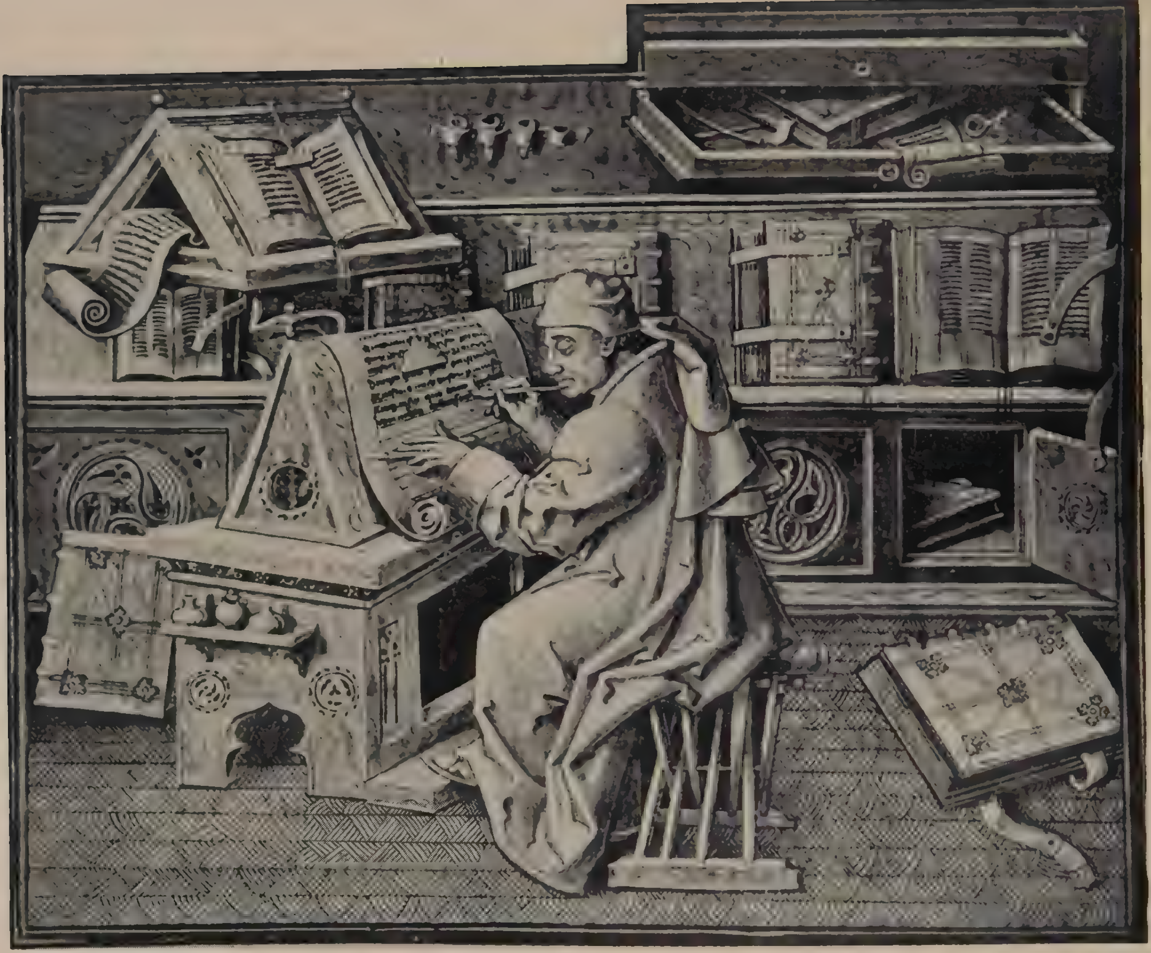

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

JEAN MIELOT, A FAMOUS SCHOLAR AND CALIGRAPHER OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Portrait taken from a MS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. This picture is interesting as showing how books were produced until the invention of printing.

evolved, certainly as early as the eighth century B.C. In his Greek literature Jevons says that reading and writing were taught in Greece as early as 500 B.C., in which year there were boys' schools in the island of Chios, and it was generally regarded as shameful not to be able to write and read. Jevons, however, suggests that education in Greece at this time was usually only enough to make a man capable of keeping accounts and of writing to his friends, and that there is no reason to suppose that the Greeks in this early age had acquired the habit of reading books. The Greek public reciters, who flourished before writing became common, were called "rhapsodists," and their custom was to entertain audiences in the open air with a complete recital of the Homeric epics. The rhapsodists travelled from town to town like a modern theatrical company on tour, and the poems and legends that they learned by heart were the stock-in-trade that secured them a living.

Alexandria succeeded Athens as the capital of Greek culture, and the Ptolemies, who were enthusiastic book-collectors, endeavoured to collect every available copy of the great Greek masterpieces. There were 700,000 Greek books [1] in the library at Alexandria, which was partly burnt by Julius Cæsar in the year 48 B.C. To-day, nearly 2,000 years later, there are only four million books in the British Museum Library. On the shelves at Alexandria, the reader found the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Plato's *Republic*, the writings of Xenophon and Herodotus, the plays of Euripedes, Sophocles, Æschylus, and Aristophanes, Euclid's Geometry, and many books on mathematics and science which have been entirely lost. It is a remarkable fact that, though the ancients, and particularly the Romans, were expert road makers, working according to scientific plans, there is in existence no treatise on the ancient art of road-making nor on any other branch of ancient engineering. Such books must have been in existence, but they have completely disappeared.

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[1] Not 700,000 separate works, but that number of volumes. The library was also a publishing concern, where books were manifolded.

The Library at Alexandria

The books in the library at Alexandria were very different things from the books in the British Museum. Most of them were written on papyrus, a material made from the pith of an Egyptian reed, and a few were written on parchment, the use of which had been discovered about a hundred years before the Alexandria library was set on fire. The papyrus book looked very much like a modern map. The matter was written on one side only, and the papyrus was fastened to a wooden roller, round which it was rolled. Some of these rolls were very long, but the usual habit was to make them comparatively short. The papyrus was generally about a foot in width. The book was written in a series of narrow columns running the full length of the roll, and the columns were from two to three and a half inches, with lines in red ruled between them. Homer's *Iliad* would probably have been written on at least twenty-four different rolls, and there were many copies of the same work in the Alexandria library, so that the actual number of individual books was very much less than the number of rolls. After the book had been written on the papyrus by the scribe, it was ornamented and embellished by a craftsman, who was the prototype of the modern book illustrator. Then the binders received the manuscript, and their business was to cut the margins and smooth the parchment or papyrus. The scroll was then fixed to a wooden roller, and the knobs at the end of the rollers were often decorated with metal ornaments. The manuscripts were written with reed pens in ink made of lamp-black and gum. The back of the book was dyed with saffron, and the rolls were usually wrapped in parchment cases, dyed purple or yellow.

The scribes were, also, the earliest booksellers. They would borrow a manuscript, possibly for a fee, laboriously copy it on their papyrus scrolls and sell the copies. There were many of these scribe-booksellers dwelling in Athens fifty years before the birth of Christ. They had their shops in the market-places, and by the time of Alexander the Great the book-selling trade had become an established institution. The ancient bookseller was not always particularly honest, and it was a common practice to give a modern manuscript the appearance of a rare antique by burying it in a sack of grain until the colour had changed and the papyrus had become worm-eaten.

§ 3

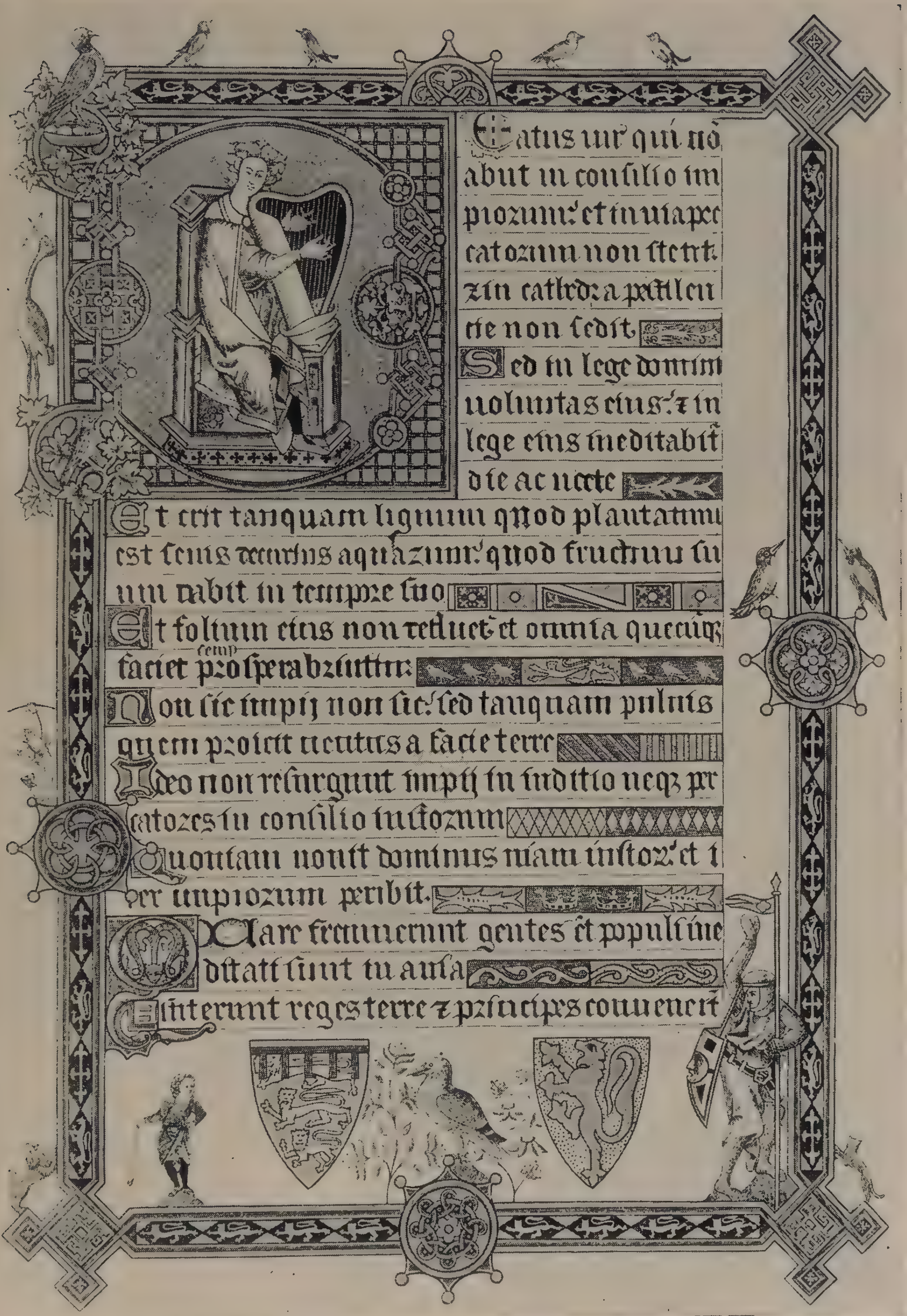
It was in the third century before Christ that Alexandria under the incentive of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and his great librarian and publisher Callimachus, became the centre of Greek literary activity, and about the same time Roman writers began to create original work in the manner of the Athenians. Perhaps the most famous literary achievement at the beginning of Alexandria's literary history was the translation of the Old Testament into Greek in the version that is known as the Septuagint. According to tradition the translation was made by seventy learned Jewish Rabbis. The fact that the papyrus was manufactured in Egypt helped to give Alexandria its importance as a book-producing centre, and its geographical position kept it, to a large extent, outside the constant wars that devastated so large a part of the ancient world. Staffs of expert copyists worked in the great Alexandrian library under the supervision of authoritative scholars, and the copies they made were distributed throughout the world by the Alexandria booksellers. The prominent literary position of Alexandria continued long after its conquest by the Romans and until Greek ceased to be the fashionable language of the ancient world. Even as late as the fifth century A.D. Alexandria was a centre of culture and learning, a fact which Charles Kingsley has employed with dramatic effect in his novel *Hypatia*.

Latin Literature

In its beginning the literature of Rome was a foreign literature. As Rome established itself as the capital of the world, ambitious writers flocked to it from all parts of the world, just as in the eighteenth century they flocked to Paris, but for a very long time Greek remained the literary language. Long after the Roman armies had occupied the whole of the Grecian Peninsula, the cultured Roman read Greek books, bought from Alexandrian copyists. The only parallel to the recognition of Greek as the sole worthy literary language occurred in the eighteenth century when French held much the same position on the continent of Europe, and when Frederick the Great of Prussia amused himself by writing French verse. When a Latin literature began to be produced it was entirely based on Greek models. The Greek plays were translated into Latin, Homer was translated into Latin, and the original Latin work was inevitably imitative. In this connection it is interesting to note that many of the more conspicuous Latin authors, who flourished before the first century B.C., that is to say before the beginning of the Golden Age of Latin literature, were foreigners and not Romans by birth. The classic period of Latin literature barely lasted a hundred years. Between the year 100 B.C. and the birth of Christ, Cicero, Lucretius, Cæsar, Horace, Virgil, Ovid, and Livy all lived and wrote and died.

In his interesting work on the *Fascination of Books,* Mr. Joseph Shaylor says:

> The Roman libraries and bookshops were the resort of the fashionable as well as of the learned society of this period. At these shops, literary and critical friends met and discussed each new book as it appeared from the copyist. These shops were located in the most frequented places. The titles of new and standard books were exhibited outside the shops as an advertisement. Announcements of works in preparation were made in the same way. The outside



atus uir qui no
abiit in consilio im
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catorum non stetit:
⁊ in catedra pestilen
tie non sedit.
Sed in lege domini
uoluntas eius: ⁊ in
lege eius meditabit
die ac nocte
Et erit tanquam lignum quod plantatum
est secus decursus aquarum: quod fructum su
um dabit in tempore suo
Et folium eius non defluet: et omnia quecumq;
semp
faciet prosperabuntur.
Non sic impij non sic: sed tanquam puluis
quem proicit uentus a facie terre
Ideo non resurgunt impij in iudicio neq; pec
catores in consilio iustorum
Quoniam nouit dominus uiam iustor: et i
ter impiorum peribit.
Quare fremuerunt gentes et populi me
ditati sunt inania
Asisterunt reges terre ⁊ principes conuenerunt

THE VIRGIN AND CHILD ATTENDED BY ANGELS, FROM A COPY OF THE "OFFICES OF THE VIRGIN"

This is a wonderful example of an illuminated MS., the work of the monks in the later Middle Ages. The beautiful illuminated ornamentations of borders and letters remain things of beauty and delight to this day.

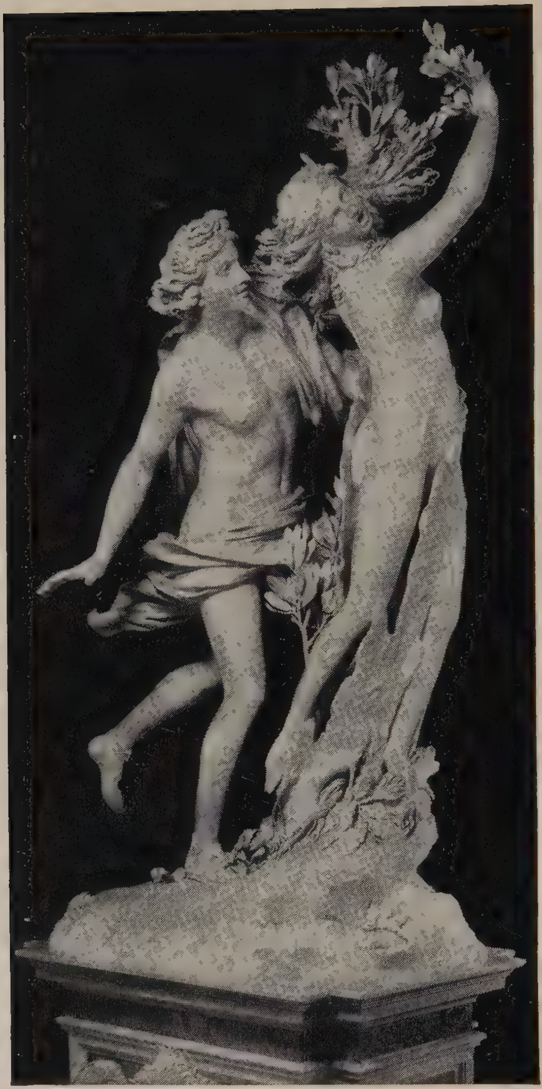

Photo: Anderson.

"APOLLO AND DAPHNE," BY BERNINI

The story of Apollo and Daphne is told by Ovid, the Roman poet, and touched on by Prior, Shelley, and other moderns. Apollo, the sun-god, fell in love with Daphne, the dew, the daughter of the god of the river. The god pursued her and she fled to her father for refuge. As her feet touched the water's edge, she found herself rooted to the ground, her father having heard her supplications and changed her into a laurel-tree. So the dew, when the sun kisses it, vanishes and leaves nothing but verdure in the place where it has been.

> box from which cheap books might be collected was also a feature in trade. Many of these old-time customs have their counterpart in the publishing and book-selling of to-day. We read of Cicero desiring to pay for a copy of one of his books which he wished sent to a friend, so that it should not be entered on the register of complimentary copies, and also giving instructions as to the "remainder" of a particular book consisting of a considerable number of copies of which he wished to dispose at a cheap rate.
>
> We are told that the most frequent fate of unsuccessful poetry was to be used for the wrapping up of fish and other goods, while large supplies of surplus stock found their way from the booksellers to the fires of public baths, a very right way of disposing of them, and a method which modern publishers might often adopt with advantage. Other ancient customs have still their modern significance, such as buying all rights in a MS. A royalty system also existed, and authors were frequently paid in part for their labours by receiving copies of their published book, although by many it was considered degrading to ask for payment for literary work, a form of pride which is not common to-day. As no copyright law was then in existence, books were copied and re-copied immediately upon publication.[1]

Professional writers in ancient Rome depended for their livelihood on the patronage of the wealthy lover of letters, and it is worth noting that what was true in Rome before the birth of Christ remained true of the whole of Europe until the end of the eighteenth century. Horace and Virgil depended on the bounty of Mæcenas, an enlightened millionaire who regarded the poet as the most useful of all the servants of the State. Centuries afterwards Molière and La Fontaine depended on the bounty of Louis XIV, and English men of letters in the eighteenth century had either to find a patron or to starve.

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[1] Shaylor credits this passage to Putnam's *Authors and their Public in Ancient Times.*

§ 4

The Change in Form

In the third century A.D. books began to change their form. Instead of being continuous rolls, the pages were folded and stitched and bound together in wooden boards, which were generally ornamented. During the Dark Ages, when few new books were written, it was in the monasteries that books found their only safe lodgment and willing hands to copy them. In most monasteries there was a room called the scriptorium where the work of transcribing was carried on.[1] Occasionally some comparatively enlightened layman appreciated the work of these literary monks. The great Charlemagne, for example, granted the rights of hunting to certain monasteries in order that the monks might provide themselves with material for the covers of their books from the skin of the deer. Although in these ten centuries there was little original authorship, there was splendid artistic expression in the ornamentation of manuscripts. The monkish illuminated borders and letters remain things of beauty and delight.

Probably the oldest illuminated manuscript is the Virgil, with its fifty miniatures on its seventy-six pages of vellum, in the Vatican. Ornamentation and illustration were practised in the first centuries after Christ in Alexandria, and it is probable that Byzantine illumination began there. There were many kinds of illumination in the Middle Ages. The art was patronised by Alfred the Great, and was practised at Winchester and elsewhere in England. Its chief development was in Burgundy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Happily, many examples of these beautiful monkish MSS., with their delicately ornamented borders and fine initial letters, have been preserved. The monastery scribes wrote with quill pens. In his

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[1] The Scriptorium was instituted in the Benedictine Monastery at Monte Cassino by Cassiodorus about 487.

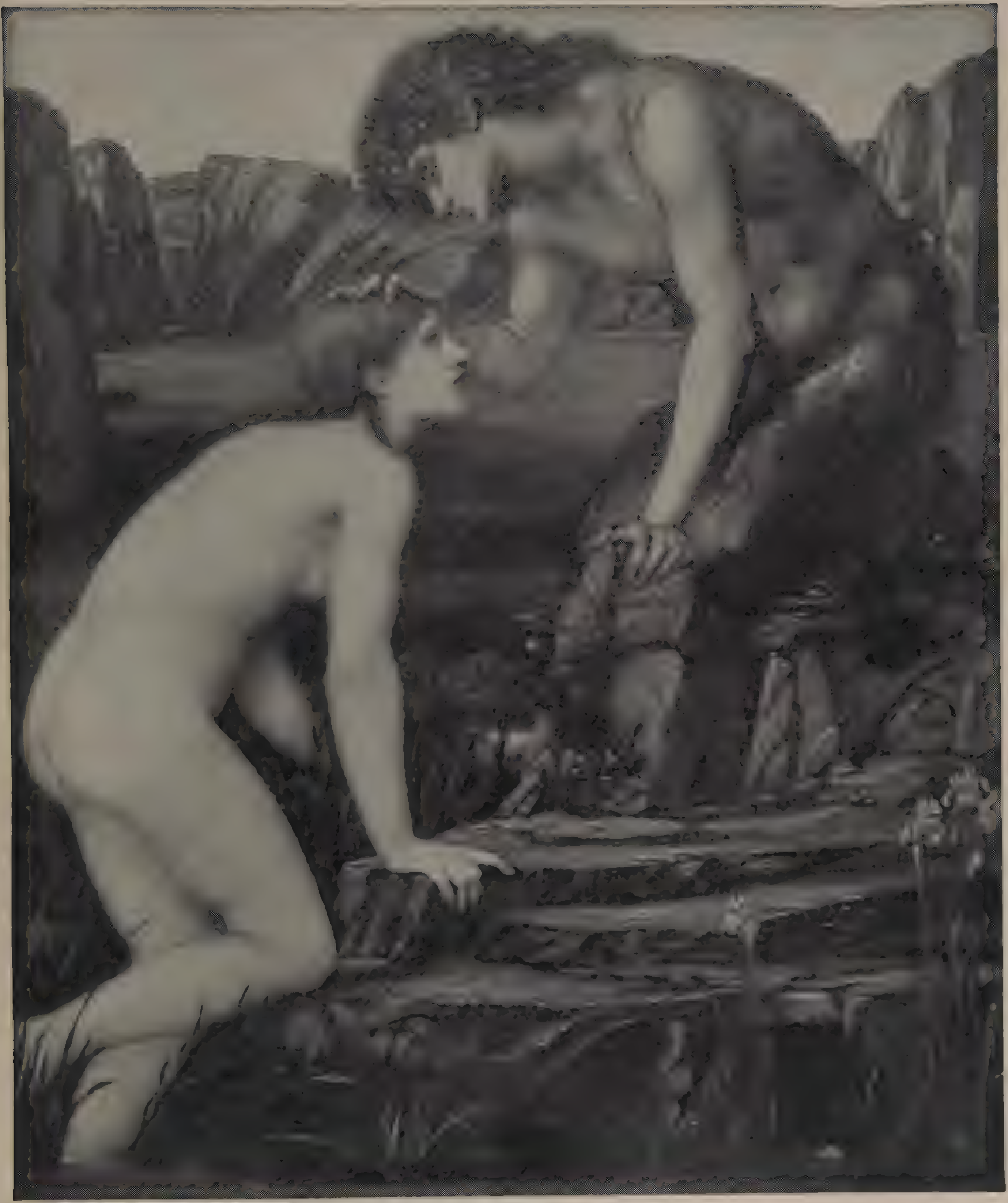

Photo Fredk. Hollyer, London.

"PAN AND PSYCHE," BY SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES

Psyche asked Pan for succour and advice after Cupid had left her, as related on page 25.

Photo: Fredk. Hollyer, London.

"ENDYMION," BY G. F. WATTS

The story of Endymion is fully told on pages 25 and 26.

interesting book, *Illumination,* Mr. Sidney Farnsworth says that probably the earliest allusion to the quill pen "occurs in the writings of St. Isidore of Seville, who lived in the early part of the seventeenth century." Quills were, however, in use at a much earlier time, and bronze pens were used by the Romans.

The artistic activities of the monasteries were not by any means universally applauded. One mediæval Puritan, referring to these beautiful manuscripts, said:

> Some possess the sacred books and have them as if they had them not. They shut them up in their book chests. They pay attention only to the thinness of the skin and the elegance of the letter. They use them less for reading than for show.

The mediæval monks who transcribed manuscripts were generally exonerated from manual labour in the fields.

The volumes in the monastic libraries consisted of pages as accurately and beautifully written as if they were printed. In the Hunterian Museum at Glasgow there is one volume that was always accounted among the printed books, until a curious observer discovered on a certain page that there was a hole in the parchment, and that this hole had been skipped. This, of course, was a proof that the work had been written by a scribe and not printed by a printing press. Writing of monkish manuscripts, Andrew Lang said:

> It is one of the charms of the MSS. that they illustrate in their minute way all the art and even the social condition of the period in which they were produced. Apostles, saints, and prophets wear the contemporary costume, and Jonah, when thrown to the hungry whale, wears doublet and trunk hose. The ornaments illustrate the architectural taste of the day. The backgrounds change

> from diapered patterns to landscapes as newer ways of looking at nature penetrated the monasteries.

In Charles Reade's novel *The Cloister and the Hearth* there is a vivid description of the artist-monks of the Middle Ages. One of them says:

> A scroll looks but barren unless a border of fruit and leaves and rich arabesques surround the good words and charm the senses as those do the soul and understanding, to say nothing of the pictures of holy men and women departed, with which the several chapters would be adorned, and not alone the eye soothed with the brave and sweetly blended colours, but the heart lifted by effigies of the saints in glory.

The literary work of the monasteries only came to an end when printing was invented by Gutenberg, a subject which will be dealt with in a later section of this OUTLINE.

§ 5

The Incentive to Write

So far, we have been considering the production and the embellishment of books, but before we proceed to the detailed examination of the great achievements of literature it is necessary to discover the reasons that impelled men from the earliest ages to write books. As we have already seen, so long ago as the birth of Christ the world possessed an elaborate literature which contained supreme examples of every literary form, and we have seen how this literature developed after the invention of writing. Let us endeavour to realise the mentality of prehistoric man living a hard life in a sparsely inhabited and bewildering world. He was continually confronted by phenomena which he could not understand, and by problems to which his ever-increasing intelligence demanded an answer. Andrew Lang has summarised these problems:

What was the origin of the world and of men and of beasts? How came the stars by their arrangement and movements? How are the motions of sun and moon to be accounted for? Why has this tree a red flower and this bird a black mark on its tail? What was the origin of the tribal dances or of this or that law of custom or etiquette?

Myths and Legends

In finding their answers to these questions, prehistoric men were influenced by the fact that they did not possess our sense of superiority to the rest of creation. They believed that all animals had souls, and that there was personality even in the inanimate. Thus Herodotus tells us that the Egyptians regarded fire as a live beast, and the wind has been universally regarded as a person and the father of children. As Andrew Lang says: "To the savage sky, sun, sea, wind are not only persons, but they are savage persons." With these beliefs in his mind, the prehistoric man set out to find answers to the problems of the universe, and these answers naturally took the form of a story or, what is called, a myth. Mythology has provided us with the early mental and spiritual history of our race. When literature came to be created and man started to write, he naturally first wrote down those well-known stories, which had been repeated from generation to generation, each new generation adding something of its own of the mysteries of life and death and of man's general relation to the world in which he lived. These myths, which form the basis of literature, cover a vast field of speculation. They include myths concerning the origin of the world and the origin of man; myths concerning the arts of life, that is to say, stories telling how man learned the use of the bow and the plough, how he learned the art of pottery, and so on; myths concerning the sun and the moon and the stars; myths concerning death; and finally and perhaps most interesting, romantic myths, stories concerned with sex love and the relation between men and women. In all these myths the one common quality is the personality given to animals and to inanimate objects, and this general conception led to the idea that the world was peopled by a vast army of gods acutely and often hostilely interested in human affairs—gods to be worshipped, gods to be placated. Between the myth and the development of the religious idea there is a very intimate connection. The beginning of literature was largely concerned with the records of the deeds of the gods, and, as we have seen, as the religious idea developed and man built temples and constructed a ritual of worship, the temple became in many parts of the world the first home of the book.

There is no more interesting and important fact in human history than the universality of folk-songs and legends. There is an amazing similarity between the subjects of the songs of the East and the songs of the West, and stories are common to all the peoples of the world. Many theories have been devised to explain the wide distribution of myths. It has been suggested that the resemblance is purely accidental, but this is ridiculous. It has been suggested that the stories, common to Indians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Germans, Scandinavians, Russians, and Celts, were known to the ancestors of them all, the Aryan tribes, who lived on the central Asian tablelands before they emigrated westward, in several great waves, to found the European nations. This seems a plausible enough explanation, but it ignores the fact that the stories known to all the Aryan peoples are also, in some instances, known to non-Aryan peoples like the Chinese and the American Indians. Probably the most satisfactory explanations of the universality of myths is that they are the result of universal experience and sentiment. As Andrew Lang has said:

> They are the rough produce of the early human mind and are not yet characterised by the differentiations of race and culture. Such myths might spring up anywhere among

Photo: Fredk. Holler, London.

"ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE," BY G. F. WATTS

"With his lute made trees
And the mountain tops, that freeze,
Bowe themselves when he did sing,"

Orpheus married Eurydice, who was bitten by a venomous serpent and died. Orpheus obtained the permission of Jupiter to seek her in Hades, where his music tamed the savage Cerberus and comforted the spirits condemned to eternal torment. He found his wife, but, disregarding the command of Pluto not to look her in the face until he was out of Hades, lost her again, and he was left to lament alone until his own death. The universality of the classic myths is shown by the fact that the name Eurydice is derived from the Sanskrit and means "the broad spreading flush of the dawn across the sky."

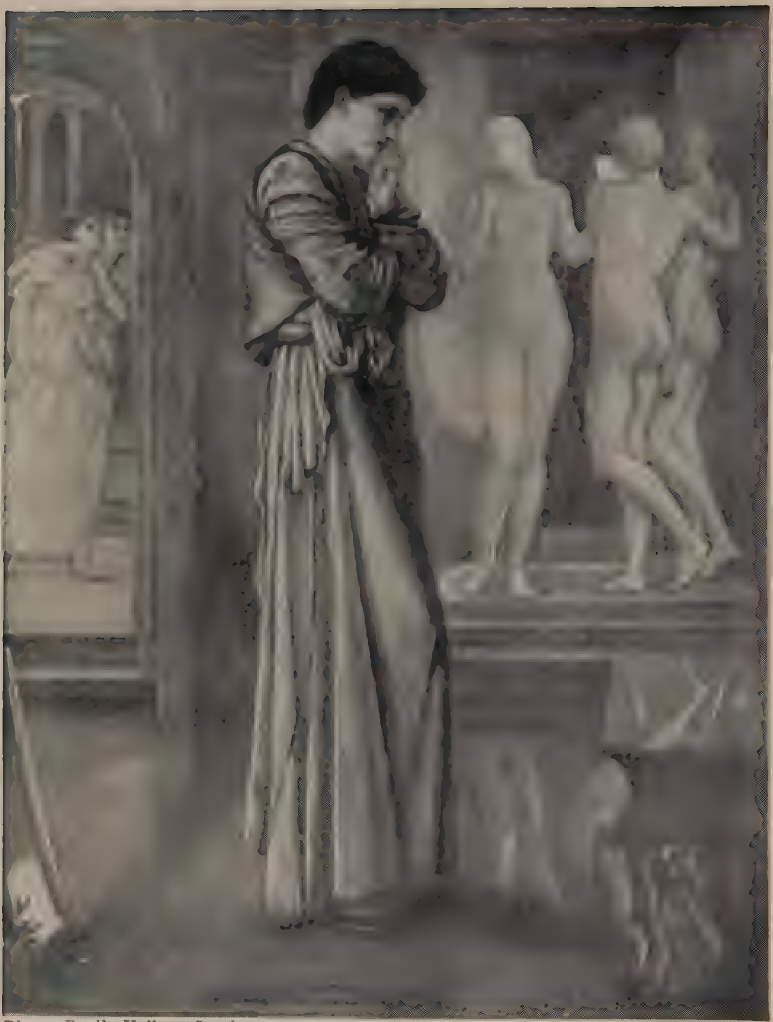

Photo: Fredk. Hollyer, London.

STORY OF PYGMALION. "THE HEART DESIRES,"
BY SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES

Pygmalion was the hero of one of the most famous of the Greek myths. He was a sculptor and, having completed the statue of a most beautiful woman, whom he christened Galatea, he prayed to Venus to give life to his work, and the goddess answered his prayer. In common with so many other classical myths, the story of Pygmalion and Galatea has inspired modern poets, among them Schiller and Andrew Lang. A play was written round the myth by W. S. Gilbert.

untutored men and anywhere might survive into civilised literature.

Cupid and Psyche

Whatever the explanation may be, the wide distribution of these old-world stories is a most suggestive and interesting fact. It may be worth while giving two examples. The story of Cupid and Psyche is one of the best known incidents in Greek mythology. Psyche, the youngest daughter of a king, was so beautiful that she excited the jealousy of Venus herself, and the goddess bade her son Cupid slay her mortal rival. Cupid stole into Psyche's apartment, but, when he caught sight of her loveliness, he started back in surprise and one of his own arrows entered into his flesh. He vowed that he would never hurt such beauty and innocence. Shortly afterwards he became Psyche's lover, visiting her at night, making her promise that she would never attempt to discover his name or to catch a glimpse of his face, and warning her that if she broke her promise he would be compelled to leave her for ever. For a long time she restrained her curiosity, and then one night she lighted her lamp and gazed in admiration at her sleeping lover. Accidentally she let a drop of oil from the lamp fall on to Cupid's shoulder, and he immediately sprang from the couch and flew through the open window, and Psyche had to suffer many things before her lover was restored to her.

This same story of a bride who disobeys the orders of her husband occurs in the Norse legend of Freja and Oddur, and is told in the Indian Vedas of Pururavas and Urvasi. There is also a Welsh and a Zulu form of the same story. The even more familiar Greek story of Diana and Endymion has its versions in other languages. Diana, the goddess of the moon, was driving her milk-white steeds across the heavens, when she caught sight of Endymion, a handsome young shepherd, asleep on the hillside. She bent down and kissed him, and night after night she left her car at the same place for a hasty blissful moment. As Byron has written:

> Chaste Artemis, who guides the lunar car,
>   The pale nocturnal vigils ever keeping,
> Sped through the silent space from star to star,
>   And, blushing, stooped to kiss Endymion sleeping.

After a while, Diana could not bear the thought of Endymion's beauty being lost or marred, so she caused him to fall into an eternal sleep and hid him in a cave never profaned by human presence. This story belongs to the Solar Myths, and it is generally supposed that Endymion was the setting sun, at which the moon gazes as she starts on her nightly journey. The same story is known to the Australian aboriginals, perhaps the most backward race in the world, to the Cingalese, and to certain African tribes, always, of course, with local variations.

These myths were the artistic possession of humanity long before the beginning of literature, and they have inspired poets throughout the ages, not only Homer and Ovid, but modern writers like Browning, Hawthorne, Herrick, Longfellow, Meredith, William Morris, Pope, Swinburne, Tennyson, and particularly Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Rossetti. It was to the stories of mythology that the great painters of the Renaissance turned for subjects when Greek learning and Greek culture were restored to Western Europe, and, centuries afterwards the same stories inspired the noble group of pre-Raphaelite painters, which was one of the outstanding glories of Victorian England.

A Co-operative Beginning

It is of the first importance to note that literature had a co-operative and not an individual beginning. The early stories of the stars, as well as the first songs crooned by mothers to their babies, were handed along from age to age, changed, elaborated, improved, until at last they were scratched on the bark of a tree or elaborately written out on the papyrus. At the same time as men were inventing and elaborating myths they were also accumulating records. As families grew into tribes, and as tribes contended for the best pastures and the best fishing, there were countless opportunities for individual prowess and courageous achievement, and the mighty deeds of the heroes of one generation became in succeeding generations the cherished possessions of their family and their tribe. The stories were repeated with pride, and, as time went on, the actual deeds of the fighting man were picturesquely exaggerated until he came to be regarded either as himself a god or as the chosen protégé of a legion of gods. These individual achievements were intimately associated with the history of the tribes to which the heroes belonged, and, thus, when men first began to write, there was a vast amount of biographical and historical tradition already in existence in the world, known by heart by scores and hundreds of different persons and ready for the scribe permanently to preserve.

But even myths, vast as was the ground they covered, and heroic legends did not exhaust the material ready to the hand of the first man who learned to write. The associated life necessarily leads to accepted custom and convention. It is impossible for a number of individuals to live together in a family or in a tribe without observing certain rules. These rules become more stringent and, at the same time, more interesting when they are associated with certain recurring events. The outstanding events in every human life are birth, death, and marriage, and with each of these certain traditional ceremonies were soon generally observed. The changing seasons also brought with them ceremonies, originally intended for the placation of the gods, and springtime and harvest, the sowing of the seed and the reaping of the crops, became red-letter days in the primitive man's year. These customs and ceremonies also supplied a fertile field for the first scribes. In addition there was ready for them a vast oral collection of nursery stories, closely allied of course with the more terrifying myths, of proverbs and of droll sayings, mostly comments on the familiar incidents of life.

§ 6

Poetry is far older than writing. It has now been established that the folk-songs of the European peoples, still repeated and sung by peasants in out-of-the-way villages, are an "immemorial inheritance." Andrew Lang says:

> Their present form, of course, is relatively recent: in centuries of oral recitation the language altered automatically, but the stock situations and ideas of many romantic ballads are of dateless age and worldwide diffusion.

The very name ballad suggests the method by which men first began to arrive at the rhythmical arrangement of words. "Ballad" is derived from the old French verb *baller,* which meant to dance, and the ballad was originally a song sung by a dancer, the words necessarily accompanying the movement. The custom of improvising words to fit a dance still exists in Russia and in the Pyrenees. Puttenham, an English writer of the sixteenth century, says in his *Art of English Poesie:*

> Poesie is more ancient than the artificiall of the Greeks and Latines, and used of the ancient and uncivill who were before all science and civilitie.

These early songs and dances were the first artistic expression of emotion. With them primitive men found (again to quote Andrew Lang) "the appropriate relief of their emotions in moments of high-wrought feeling or on solemn occasions." In addition, therefore, to the stories and legends and myths, the biographies of traditional heroes and the records of families and tribes, the first professional literary man had a store of popular

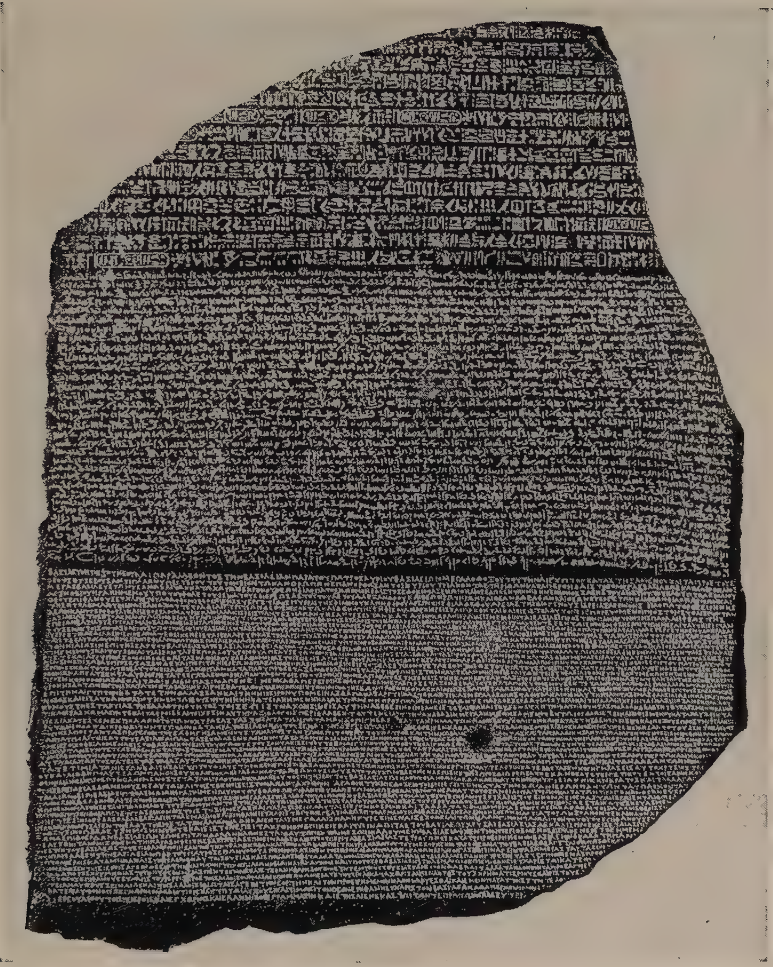

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

THE ROSETTA STONE

This "Stone" is a portion of a large black basalt stele measuring 3 feet 9 inches by 2 feet 4½ inches, and is inscribed with fourteen lines of hieroglyphics, thirty-two lines of demotic, and fifty-four lines of Greek. It was found in 1798 by a French officer of artillery named Boussard, among the ruins of Fort Saint Julien, near the Rosetta mouth of the Nile, and was removed, in 1799, to the *Institut National* at Cairo, to be examined by the learned; and Napoleon ordered the inscription to be engraved and copies of it to be submitted to the scholars and learned societies of Europe. In 1801 it passed into the possession of the British, and it was sent to England in February 1802. It was exhibited for a few months in the rooms of the Society of Antiquaries, and then was finally deposited in the British Museum.

From this inscription was first obtained the key to the decipherment of the hieroglyphics and the interpretation of the ancient language of Egypt; the names of the Kings, which in the hieroglyphics are enclosed within oblong rings or "cartouches," giving the clue to the identification of the letters of the hieroglyphic alphabet.

songs to write down on his papyrus, and it is clear that these songs were the beginning of all poetry, poetry having been defined by Mr. Watts-Dunton as "the concrete and artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmical language." It is important to note that in poetry as well as in prose the initial impulse was absolutely popular. The common dreams and aspirations were the subject of the unknown poets, who gave them a new and greater beauty. This early popular art was followed by the development of a definite poetry of personality, the expression of particular rather than general emotion, which was an aristocratic and not a democratic possession. The extent to which the folk-song belonged to the people has been proved by the continuance of its popularity into the centuries of progress and civilisation. In the Golden Age of Greece and Rome, few men could read and fewer still could write. But most men could sing, and many men could improvise songs. In the dark centuries that followed the fall of the Roman Empire, books had few readers, but songs were still sung. The new learning that came with the Renaissance hardly affected the common people, and the power to read and write has only become general during the last hundred years. But through all the ages the unlettered have possessed a spoken literature of their own—stories and songs, the same in substance as the stories repeated and the songs sung by primitive tribesmen long before the beginning of historical records.

There is no more interesting and important fact in human history than the similarity of folk-songs and legends. The same stories are common to all the peoples of the world, and there is an amazing similarity between the subjects of the songs of the East and the songs of the West. A great and entertaining literature has been written round this subject in recent times. In these pages it has been sufficient to suggest the origins of romantic literature and to point out the vast store of material that was waiting for the first literary artist. Early literature was therefore the collection of traditional artistic possessions, the first writers selecting, arranging, and beautifying stories and songs that had been familiar to their ancestors for many generations. This fact should be borne in mind by the reader as he begins to consider the monuments of ancient literature, the epics of Homer and the earlier books of the Bible.

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II

HOMER

HOMER

§ 1

HOMER is the greatest of all the epic poets, and he has left us the earliest pictures of European civilisation. Both as poetry and as history the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* hold a place apart in world-literature, and it is appalling to think of what would have been the consequences if they had not been preserved. They constituted the Bible of the Greeks in historic times; thus the philosophers, Plato among them, are constantly quoting lines from them to illustrate a point of morals or to clinch a spiritual argument just as Christians have been in the habit of using scriptural texts. To the Greeks Homer was *the* poet, just as to us the Bible is *the* book; and they, like us, have often found a deeper significance or a more poignant consolation than was originally intended in plain words which have gathered, in the long succession of time, a charm of association and the added beauty that is memorial. Moreover, these truly great poems, temples open to sunshine and sea-breezes, and built of noble numbers, have been models for the epic in every western age that knew them, or the works that perpetuated their pattern (e.g. Virgil's *Æneid*). It is probable that we should never have had the "artificial epics," as they have been called, of Virgil, Lucan, Dante, Milton, and the rest, if the Homeric poems had been lost. It is even possible that such a loss would have prevented the "grand style" of poetry from being consciously cultivated. But what perhaps illustrates the enormous influence exerted by those happily preserved masterpieces of man's imagination is this strange fact —that even in the workaday world of to-day plain people know the meaning of the adjective "Homeric," though they may not have read a single line of any translation of Homer. We all know what is meant when a speaker or a writer alludes to "Homeric grandeur" or "Homeric laughter," or observes that "even Homer sometimes nods." Furthermore, the chief Homeric characters are known to us all for their predominant qualities: Achilles for his valour, Helen for her beauty, Ulysses for his resourcefulness, Penelope for her faithfulness. Any orator, even if his pedestal be only a soap-box at a street-corner, can use one of these names to point a moral; they are as familiar on our lips as the names of Hamlet or Pecksniff, Othello or Micawber.

I have spoken, and shall go on speaking, of Homer as a poet, human and indivisible; this is done "without prejudice," as the lawyers say—that is, without expressing any present opinion as to the way in which the Homeric poems came into being. He or she who wishes to visit the "wide expanse"

> That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne,

and to "breathe its pure serene" (the inspired Keats gets the absolutely just word here!), need know nothing whatever about that controversial labyrinth, the Homeric Problem. Indeed, a childlike ignorance of the whole vast discussion started by Wolf's *Prolegomena* (published in 1795) is a real advantage, for it puts the new votary in the position, as it were, of a listener to the recital of the poems in the springtide of historic Hellas when nobody had even begun to doubt whether the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* had been created by the same master-poet, the selfsame blind old singer of a later but still beautiful legend, which shows us many cities contending for the honour of being his birthplace. For these poems can be read in verse translations—with joy to the reader—for the story, and to become acquainted with the noble men and women, the not more noble gods and goddesses, who love and hate and fight and speak and live and die in their stirring vicissitudes.

Achilles the Hero

There are no better stories to be found in books; no personages better worth knowing. In Achilles we have a hero indeed; lacking the Christian gentleness that is an aureole about Lancelot's bowed head, it is true, but though barbaric in the violence of his anger and his unrestrained sorrow, yet a glorious fighter, a gentleman unafraid of the early doom ordained for him (even his chestnut steed knows all about it), capable of the tenderest compassion and of high-born courtesy to a suppliant enemy. In Ulysses, again, we meet the heroic adventurer, bravely enduring all the toils and terrors of a world that is still wonderland; a lover of his wife, too, to the end, and unable to find, even in the embraces of an ageless goddess in her garden-close in a fairy isle, any cure for his homesickness—for, if he had no word equivalent to our "home" on his lips, yet he had the thing itself in his much-enduring heart.

Then there are the Homeric women, fair and wise and holy—hardly equalled for noble simplicity in the long galleries of heroic womanhood, from Sophocles to Shakespeare. There is Andromache, the loving young wife and mother who, in losing her chivalrous and valiant Hector, loses all that makes life worth living. There is Penelope, lacking nothing of the gentle dignity of the lady of a great house, even when that house is invaded by turbulent suitors who waste its substance and seduce her serving women, utterly destroying the kindly discipline of the household; keeping under hard trial her beauty and her honour, the respectful affection of her son, Telemachus, and her loyalty to her long-absent lord. Then there is the maiden Nausicaa on the eve of a fair marriage—perfect in her sense of household duties, her virginal delicacy, her charming common-sense, her gracious and generous courage. Above all and before all, there is Helen, the innocent cause of the wars of the Greeks and Trojans alike, who is all the more impressive because we see so little of her and because Homer, unlike the makers of mediæval romances, is far too wise to attempt a catalogue of her charms—here is an early example of the "nothing too much" which is the secret of so many triumphs of Greek art! Because of this reticence the beauty of Helen has lived through the ages and made flaming altars of the hearts of innumerable poets.

Helen of Troy

Almost all our knowledge of Helen's beauty is derived from a few lines in the third book of the *Iliad* where she goes up to the walls of Troy to see the fight between Paris and Menelaus. "So speaking, the goddess put into her heart a longing for her husband of yore and her city and her father and mother. And straightway she veiled herself with white linen, and went forth from her chamber, shedding a great tear." When the elders of Troy, seated on the wall, saw her coming, softly they spoke to one another winged words: "Small wonder that the Trojans and mailed Greeks should endure pain for many years for such a woman. Strangely like she is in face to some immortal spirit." The other Trojan women, when Troy fell, became the spoils of the victors, slaves and paramours; Cassandra lost her life, Andromache her little son, as later stories tell. But Helen was restored to her husband and her gleaming palace in Sparta, and we meet her again when Telemachus goes there, in hopes of getting news of his father. She is then once more the fairest of earthly queens, her beauty august as Dian's, and the perfect hostess, as she sits in her golden arras-covered chair and Philo, her hand-maiden, brings her the wonderful silver work-basket on wheels, which she received as a parting gift from Alcandra, wife of the King of Thebes in Egypt. And she recognises Tele-

Photo: Alinari.

"APOTHEOSIS OF HOMER," BY INGRES

(In the Louvre, Paris)

A picture representing the homage of Poets of all Ages to the "great Blind Father of Song."

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

"HELEN OF TROY," BY LORD LEIGHTON

". . . The face that launched a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium!"

machus by his likeness to his father whom she had known so well in the days when, under the compulsion of the Goddess of Love, she belonged to Paris for a season. It is with perfect good breeding that she alludes to the stormy past when, against her will, she was the cause of so much shedding of blood and of tears.

Many other of the Homeric persons live in remembrance, so clearly are their personalities set forth without waste of words; for it is what they *say* and *do*, not any comments of the poet, that defines them for the reader. The crowd, however, the nameless rank-and-file of the contending powers, is hardly a person of the drama, as it would be in an epic written in these democratic days. In the battle-pieces all we perceive of the nameless hosts is the bronzen glow of their harness, the hubbub of their cries, the storm of their stones—and they fade away into serried insignificance, even when the stage is given up to "man-slayings," successions of personal combats between the lesser heroes. It is true that, when the Greeks assemble to discuss great questions of military policy, even the fierce, overbearing king of men, Agamemnon, must take heed of the trend of their mass opinion. The beginnings of Greek democracy, which is the root of our own, are here clearly indicated.

The Rank-and-File

But it is seldom indeed that the heroes and the deities trouble themselves about the rank-and-file. Thersites, the only demagogue who does raise his voice in bitter, sneering words—curiously enough, he is a man of very noble ancestry, well-connected even for Homeric personage—gets thrashed by Ulysses, who has a special dislike for him. The gods and goddesses are altogether human, except that they are immune from death (though not from pain, such as that of a wound) and have power and beauty beyond the lot of mankind. Just as they have had their love-affairs with mortals, gods and goddesses alike, to engender a Helen or an Achilles, so they descend into the press of human battle, to help this or that combatant in a duel or even to fight hand-to-hand themselves. They brag and revile one another before fighting in the very manner of mortals. Mars calls Minerva "dog-fly" before lunging at her with his spear, and when he is laid out by a jagged black stone, which hits him on the neck, and falls "reaching over seven furlongs as he fell," the goddess taunts him in most unladylike fashion. Juno calls Diana a "Shameless she-dog," grabs her bow and quiver, beats her sorely with them, and the huntress-deity, "'full of tears,' fled like a wood-pigeon." Even more comical, to modern ideas, is the way Juno uses her charms, putting on her best immortal clothes and ear-rings with three gem stones in them, and borrowing the love-producing embroidered girdle of Venus on pretence of reconciling Oceanus and Tethys, in order to prevent Jove from carrying out the arrangement that the Trojans should win a battle. She also bribes Sleep to her husband when he has had her embraces. She so well succeeds in arousing his passionate admiration that he proceeds to compare her favourably with seven other persons he has had love dealings with, before constructing out of a cloud a covert in which he can embrace her unseen. The characters of the deities are as clearly presented by Homer as those of the mortal heroes and heroines. Jove is imperious, genial, impatient, passion-swayed, a bit uxorious; Juno, intent on securing victory for the Greeks, is a diplomatic great lady who knows just when her petulance has exhausted her lord's patience, and it is necessary to resort to caresses; Apollo, prophet and minister of death, actively enforces his fateful decrees; Minerva is the puissant war-goddess and a patron of art and industry, and also what we should call an excellent woman of business.

This familiarity with the denizens of Olympus, absurd as it seems to us moderns, is really a striking proof that Homer implicitly believed in them as personally engaged in the management of human affairs. The selfsame naïve faith inspires the legends of the Middle Ages in which we find the saints leaving

Paradise to take part in the labours and diversions of humble persons, and even the Virgin Mary helping a devout worshipper to meet his (or her) beloved.

§ 2

THE ILIAD

The story of Homer's *Iliad* is the story of the Trojan war. The myth begins with a quarrel of the gods. Eris threw among the guests at a wedding feast an apple bearing the inscription "for the fairest." Juno, Venus, and Minerva each claimed the apple and Jupiter, the god above the gods, decided that Paris, younger son of Priam, king of Troy, should decide between them. It was Venus to whom Paris gave the apple and thus incurred the deadly hatred of the other two goddesses. Soon after his decision had been given, Paris sailed to Greece. He was entertained by Menelaus, king of Sparta, and he repaid the hospitality by making love to his wife, the incomparably beautiful Helen, whom he persuaded to elope with him to Troy. Menelaus called on the other Greek chieftains to aid him in recovering his wife, and after some hesitation the most famous of them, the subtle Ulysses, the hero Achilles, gigantic Ajax, Diomed, Nestor, the oldest of the chiefs, and Agamemnon, the brother of Menelaus, responded to the call. Agamemnon was appointed commander-in-chief of the Greek army. The great leader of the Trojan forces was Priam's elder son, Hector, husband of Andromache, and son of the famous Hecuba. The gods took sides in the contest. Juno and Minerva were naturally for the Greeks and against the Trojans, while Venus and Mars were on the other side. Neptune favoured the Greeks, and Jupiter and Apollo were neutral. The war had lasted for nine years when a quarrel occurred between Achilles and Agamemnon—and here the story of the *Iliad* begins.

The Wrath of Achilles

It is the anger, not the valour, of Achilles which is the unifying motive of the *Iliad.* The "wraths" or feuds of heroes are common themes in Greek legends, as in those of the Scandinavian peoples. It was decreed, we are told in the first few lines, that innumerable ills should visit the Greeks, camped before Troy, because of the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon, the leader of the host. The camp was afflicted with a deadly pestilence, and, when Calchas, the seer, was asked to discover the cause, he tells Agamemnon that Apollo has been launching his envenomed arrows because of the king's refusal to ransom the daughter of Chryses, his priest, in a city the Greeks had taken and sacked, sharing the women and other spoil. Agamemnon yields the maiden, and tyrannically deprives Achilles of Briseis, his share of the captured women. Achilles returns to his tent and ship in bitter anger, and implores Thetis, his goddess mother, to bring the vengeance of heaven on the tyrant. Jove is loath to offend his wife, who is on the side of the Greeks, and sends a dream messenger to Agamemnon, counselling him to prepare battle against the Trojans in certain hope that it will bring about the fall of the city, which has already been besieged for ten years.

There is much high debate, both in the Greek camp and in the heavenly court, in the first two books, the second of which ends with a roll-call of the forces on either side. Thus early we notice the action shifting from earth to heaven and back again. Also this peculiarity of the speeches is apparent; they faithfully express the general characters of the speakers, whether human or divine, but there are none of the little intimate touches which modern writers employ to reveal individuality. This is a characteristic of Greek oratory in all ages (even to-day, it is said by a friend of M. Veniselos), and one of many proofs that the Greek genius refrains from personal detail, which might obscure the general effect, in all matters of art.

Photo: Braun.

HOMER SINGING HIS POEMS

From a drawing by Paul Chenavard in the Museum, Lyons.

Before the invention of the art of writing, wandering bards, of whom Homer may have been one, journeyed from village to village reciting their songs.

Photo: Braun.

PREPARING FOR THE SIEGE OF TROY

From a drawing by Paul Chenavard in the Museum, Lyons.

The Greek army included Achilles, the great fighting hero.

In the absence of Achilles the long battle goes against the Greeks, though their more famous champions perform many valiant deeds. The Olympians anxiously follow the course of the struggle, each of them doing what he or she can to help this side or that and to rescue special favourites. There are many dramatic full-length episodes of man-to-man fighting; the background of the narrative is coloured crimson and bronzen, as it were, with manslayings. Paris challenges the Greek princes and is vanquished by Menelaus, but rescued by Venus, who threatens Helen that she will cause both hosts to wreak vengeance on her if she persists in refusing her embraces to her cowardly paramour. A truce between the armies is violated by Pandarus, who wounds Menelaus with an arrow. Diomed slays a number of the minor champions of Troy, including the treacherous Pandarus, wounds first Venus and then Mars—vain victories for which, as later legends aver, he paid with his life. The Greeks more than hold their own until Hector arms himself and takes part in the fray. There is a set duel ending in a draw, so to speak, between Hector and the greater Ajax (whom the lesser Ajax follows through legend, faithful as a shadow), and they exchange chivalrous words and gifts at parting. The action then shifts to "many-ridg'd Olympus," where Jove forbids all interference on the part of the other gods and goddesses, foretelling later on the misfortunes that await the Greeks. Hector at once prepares his host for an attack on the Greek camp in the morning. And that very night, the besieging forces being visited by "Panic, companion of Chill Fear," Ulysses, Phœnix, and Ajax go to Achilles to arrange a reconciliation, offering on behalf of Agamemnon to restore the still unravished Briseis (poor "maid of Brisa"! thrown from hand to hand, she has no name of her own!), to give him one of the king's three daughters in marriage, without requiring him to make a settlement on her, and to add to the other gifts seven fair cities. Achilles refuses in a speech which is the supreme climax of the Homeric oratory.

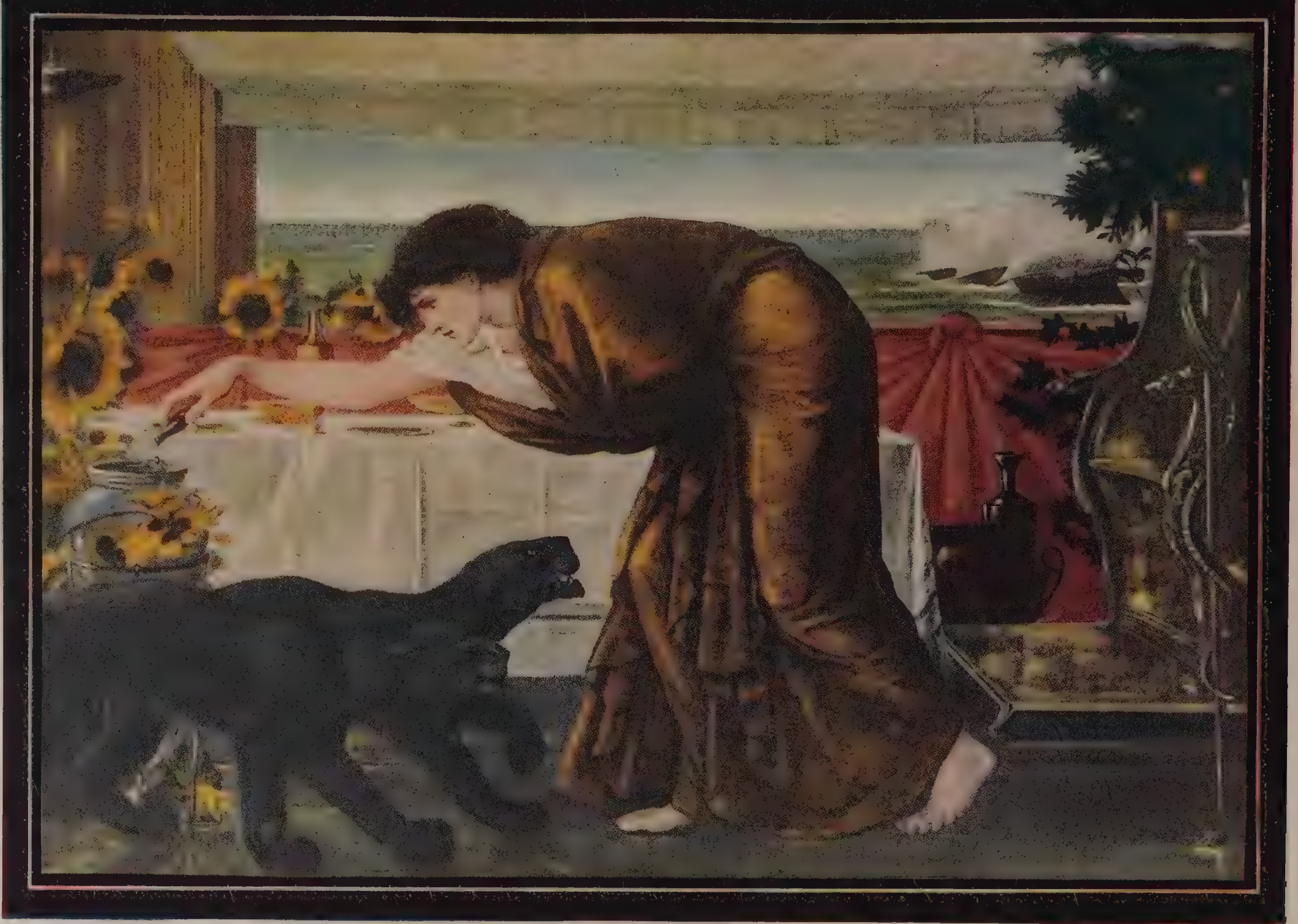
The translation is by Alexander Pope:

> O soul of battles, and thy people's guide!
> (To Ajax thus the first of Greeks replied)
> Well hast thou spoke; but at the tyrant's name
> My rage rekindles, and my soul's on flame:
> 'Tis just resentment, and becomes the brave;
> Disgraced, dishonour'd, like the vilest slave!
> Return, then, heroes! and our answer bear,
> The glorious combat is no more my care;
> Not till, amidst yon sinking navy slain,
> The blood of Greeks shall dye the sable main;
> Not till the flames, by Hector's fury thrown,
> Consume your vessels, and approach my own;
> Just there, the impetuous homicide shall stand,
> There cease his battle, and there feel our hand.

It is an eventful night. Diomed and Ulysses enter the Trojan camp in the darkness, slaying Rhesus and taking his snow-white steeds. This is a thrilling exploit, wonderfully well told. But, led by Hector, the Trojans are irresistible, and even Neptune could not have saved the Greek camp from capture but for the love-stratagem of Juno. Perhaps the real "moral" of the *Iliad* is to be expressed in the lines:

> Two things greater than all things are:
> One is Love, the other is War.

The great turning-point in the tremendous drama, which stirs heaven as profoundly as earth, comes when Patroclus intervenes, wearing the armour of Achilles and leading his Myrmidons to battle. Hector kills Patroclus and a nobler "wrath" lifts the epic to a loftier range of emotion. Even the Greek critics, trained in the higher and more intense life of Greek tragedy, have seen that anger at the loss of a girl slave was an inadequate motive for "sulking in one's tent"; only the sublime genius of Homer could have carried it off so well.



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"THE WINE OF CIRCE"

FROM THE PAINTING BY SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES

During the wanderings of Ulysses after the fall of Troy, he came to the island of Ææa, where the enchantress Circe mixed "infusing drugs" with the wine that she gave to th followers of the Greek hero, and afterwards turned them into "swine in head and voice, bristles and shape." **Ulysses, himself, escaped from the same fate through the help of the god Mercury, who gave him a herb that protected him from Circe's magic spell.**

The Forge of Vulcan

Achilles is wild with anger and grief at the death of his dearest comrade; the loss of his armour (equivalent to the loss of his guns by a modern soldier) touches him in his honour as a warrior. Vulcan, at the suit of Thetis, forges for the hero a new suit of harness; the description of the shield is one of the most famous passages in Homer and, now we know so much of Mycenæan art, a priceless piece of historical evidence.

The translation is by Ernest Myers:

> First fashioned he a shield great and strong, adorning it all over, and set thereto a shining rim, triple, bright-glancing, and therefrom a silver baldrick. Five were the folds of the shield itself; and therein fashioned he much cunning work from his wise heart.
>
> There wrought he the earth, and the heavens, and the sea, and the unwearying sun, and the moon waxing to the full, and the signs every one wherewith the heavens are crowned, Pleiads and Hyads and Orion's might, and the Bear that men call also the Wain, her that turneth in her place, and watcheth Orion, and alone hath no part in the baths of Ocean.
>
> Also he fashioned therein two fair cities of mortal men. In the one were espousals and marriage feasts, and beneath the blaze of torches they were leading the brides from their chambers through the city, and loud rose the bridal song. And young men were whirling in dance, and among them flutes and viols sounded high; and the women standing each at her door were marvelling. But the folk were gathered in the assembly place; for there a strife was arisen, two men striving about the blood-price of a man slain; the one claimed to pay full atonement, expounding to the people, but the other denied him and would take naught; and both were fain to receive arbitrament at the hand of a daysman. And the folk were cheering both, as they took part on either side. And heralds kept order among the folk, while the elders on polished stones were sitting in the sacred

> circle, and holding in their hands staves from the loud-voiced heralds. Then before the people they rose up and gave judgment each in turn. And in the midst lay two talents of gold, to be given unto him who should plead among them most righteously.

This is only part of the decoration of this famous shield. No wonder that when Vulcan had finished his task and had given it to the goddess Thetis, the mother of Achilles, "she like a falcon sprang down from snowy Olympus bearing from Vulcan the glittering arms."

Achilles is reconciled to Agamemnon and, clad in his new armour, leads out the Myrmidons to battle, slaying many Trojan champions but seeking solely the life of Hector.

So packed is the narrative that it is no more possible to indicate here every important incident [1] than it would be to exhibit the characters and careers of, say, all Thackeray's people in a brief abstract. Let me give a "close-up," as it were, of the most tragical episode of Hector's death at the ruthless hands of Achilles.

Hector, "bound by deadly Fate," stands before the walls of Troy at the Scæan Gate. His old father, Priam, is on the walls; he sees Achilles rushing on "like the star that rises in harvest time"—the Hound of Orion that brings fever on men. Both Priam and Hecuba implore their son to come within the walls, but he is deaf to their entreaties.

Achilles draws nigh and Hector awaits him, like a mountain serpent in his den, full of poison and full of wrath. But when Achilles is on him, his bronzen armour a blaze, the sense of doom overawes him and he takes to flight. Achilles pursues him round the walls of Troy, like a falcon pursuing a dove. All the Olympians are watching the twain; Jove asks—Shall we save Hector or allow Achilles to slay him? Minerva protests

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[1] There are 15,673 lines in the *Iliad,* 12,889 in the *Odyssey;* and something vital is said or done in 90 per cent. of these lines.

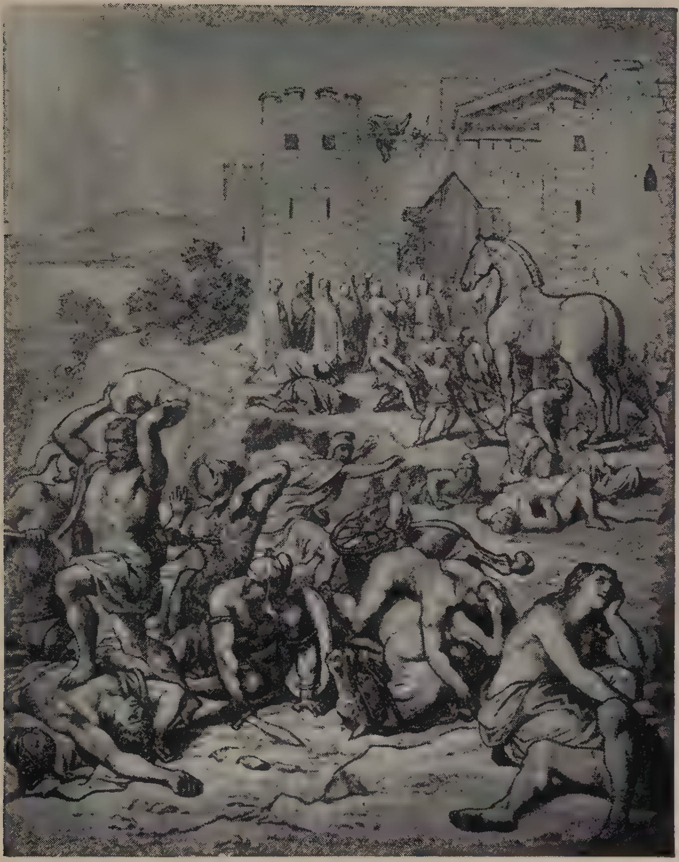

Photo: Braun.

GREEKS AND TROJANS OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF TROY

From a drawing by Paul Chenavard in the Museum, Lyons.

Helen, the wife of Menelaus, had fled from Greece to Troy with Paris, King Priam's son, and a Greek army marched against the city to recover Helen from her lover.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

"THE FORGE OF VULCAN," BY VELASQUEZ

Vulcan is the god-smith. Homer relates that Zeus banished him from heaven for rebellion.

against the idea of saving a mortal doomed long ago by destiny. At the third circuit of the walls, as Jove "hung his golden balances and sets in them two lots of drear death," one for either combatant, Hector's scale sinks and from that moment nobody, not even Apollo can save him. Minerva, who darted down to the battlefield, assumes the form of Deiphobus, Hector's brother, and pretends she has come to help him. Thus heartened, Hector turns to defy Achilles to combat. Before fighting he proposes a chivalrous pact: that, whichever of them falls, the other shall restore his body to receive the funeral rites due from his friends. Achilles refuses sternly; there can be no pact between them, any more than between men and lions or wolves and sheep.

Achilles hurls his spear; Hector crouches and it flies over his head; Minerva, unseen of Hector, restores it to the Greek hero. Hector hurls his spear, but misses; he calls to Deiphobus for a second spear. But Deiphobus has vanished, and it flashes on Hector that Minerva has played him false. He knows his doom is on him, but draws his sword and attacks his foe, hoping to do something memorable before he dies. Achilles mortally wounds him with a spear-thrust in the neck; fallen and dying he implores the victor not to let his body be devoured by dogs from the Greek ships. Achilles, his hate unsated, will brook no thought of ransom for the corpse: "would that my heart's desire," he replies, "could bid me carve thy flesh and eat it now, for the evil thou hast done me."

> To whom thus Hector of the glancing helm,
> Dying: "I know thee well; nor did I hope
> To change thy purpose; iron is thy soul.
> But see that on thy head I bring not down
> The wrath of Heaven, when by the Scæan Gate
> The hand of Paris, with Apollo's aid,
> Brave warrior as thou art, shall strike thee down."

Even as he speaks, he dies and his spirit passes to the viewless shades. Achilles foully misuses his body, piercing the feet, and binding them to his chariot with leathern thongs, and trailing the noble head in the dust, as he drives at break-neck speed back to the Greek camp.

It is not the end. The funeral rites are paid to Patroclus and games held in his honour. Then, cured of his madness of sorrow and wrath, Achilles repents of his desecration of a noble enemy's corpse, and receives Priam with kindness and reverence, granting withal an eleven days' truce while the funeral rites are rendered to Hector. Yet the Greeks of the days to come, with their bitter loathing of any insult to the bodies of the dead (which Hesiod includes in his list of the five deadly sins), never quite forgave Achilles for his brutal and barbarian frenzy. Tragical though his life was, overshadowed by the certainty of death in his prime, he was never made the hero of a Greek tragedy.

The *Iliad* finishes with the funeral of "Hector, tamer of horses." Andromache, his stricken wife, is the real heroine of the story. Troy is destroyed by the Greeks, but amid the clamour of the men of war the reader hears "the far-off echo of a woman's sigh." There is no mention in the *Iliad* of the deaths of Achilles and Paris. But both were killed during the siege. In the *Odyssey* the ashes of Achilles are said to have been buried in a golden urn, and Sophocles tells us that Paris was mortally wounded by Philoctetes just before the capture of Troy.

§ 3

THE WANDERINGS OF ULYSSES

The *Odyssey* is the story of the wanderings of Ulysses after the fall of Troy and the victory of the Greek host. Menelaus had recovered his wife, Helen, and she had returned with him to Sparta. The other Greek heroes had also gone home, all but Ulysses, whose wife Penelope with their son Telemachus waited with anxious hearts in his kingdom of Ithaca.

The Writing of the Odyssey

There is not the electrical atmosphere of doom in the *Odyssey* which at times affects the reader of the *Iliad* like the imminence of a thunderstorm. When Bentley said that the former was written for women and the latter for men he put into definite words an indefinable feeling which occurs to all careful students of Homer; except for one atrocious episode of revenge and torture, the manners of the people in the story of Ulysses' wanderings are milder and there is far more of what may be called domestic interest. Indeed, it is difficult not to feel that the *Odyssey* was written in a later and more civilised age, or at any rate at a period when the uncivilising effects of a great war had passed away, and those who are faithful to the old idea that they were both the work of one poet, will believe that he composed the *Iliad* in the fierce prime of life and the *Odyssey* in his serene old age. The temperamental gap between the two poems is far greater than that between "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained."

The *Odyssey* falls so naturally into six actions, each consisting of four books, that it seems to have been so designed by the author. The first section is mainly concerned with the trouble Telemachus, the wandering hero's only son, has with the suitors for his mother Penelope's hand and goodly estate, and his journey to Pylos and Sparta in quest of news of his lost father.

Ten years had passed since the sacking of Troy, and nothing had been heard at home of Ulysses' fate. He had failed to bring his men back to rocky Ithaca, for they had perished through their folly in killing and eating the oxen of the Sun, and he himself had been cast away on a lonely isle, the abode of the nymph Calypso. She wanted him to forget his mortal wife and marry her, and to that intent had kept him in her wondrous island all the while. Neptune, who had never forgiven Ulysses for killing his ogre of a son, Polyphemus, happening to be away on a visit to the Ethiopians, "the utmost of mankind," the other

Olympians get together and arrange Ulysses' return home. Mercury is sent to tell Calypso of the decision, while Minerva appears in disguise to Telemachus and advises him to seek news of his father from his father's friends, Nestor and Menelaus.

The next day Telemachus sends the criers round the town to summon an assembly to hear his complaints of his mother's suitors who are eating him out of house and home. Antinous, the bully of the suitors, blames Penelope for all the trouble; she had sent beguiling messages to every one of them, and had for nearly four years tricked them with the weaving of a pall she said was for Laertes (the father of Ulysses, and a very old and weary man), working by day and undoing the work at night. The other suitors are insolent, but Minerva in a new disguise presents herself as Mentor, and gets Telemachus the ship he requires for his voyage. So he visits Nestor at Pylos, who tells him about the murder of Agamemnon by Clytemnestra, but has no news of his father. Nestor advises him to go to Sparta and see if Menelaus knows anything. He and the son of his wise old host, Pisistratus, set out for Lacedæmon in a chariot and pair. At Sparta Helen recognises him, and they all weep over the great days that have been. It is a joy to the young men (yes, and to every reader) to see the ever-beautiful Helen, and to hear what she and her husband have to say. The latter tells the company how, when the famous Wooden Horse had been brought into Troy, Helen walked round it, striking the hollow ambush with her hand and imitating the voice of each Greek prince's wife—so faithfully that, but for the example of restraint shown by Ulysses, some of them would have answered back or even leapt out of the horse. What is more to the purpose, Menelaus tells Telemachus that his father is in Calypso's lonely isle; which information, with other facts about the unhappy adventures of the Greek heroes, Menelaus had obtained by disguising himself as a seal and seizing Proteus, seer of the deep, and holding him tight as he variously disguised himself (as lion,

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"PENELOPE AND HER SUITORS," BY J. W. WATERHOUSE

After the siege of Troy, Ulysses wandered for many years. His adventures supply the plot of the *Odyssey*. His wife, Penelope, remained at home in Ithaca, persecuted by many suitors.

Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

"CAPTIVE ANDROMACHE," BY LORD LEIGHTON

(From the painting in the Manchester Art Gallery.)

After the fall of Troy, Andromache, widow of Hector the Trojan hero, was taken prisoner by the Greeks. Andromache is the classic type of the faithful wife, and her love for her husband is expressed in one of the finest passages in the *Iliad*.

dragon, panther, bear, a limpid stream, a shady tree), until the "Old Man of the Sea" was tired and compelled to answer questions.

The next two sections deal with the wondrous adventures of Ulysses. The fair Calypso obeys the behest of Olympus and allows Ulysses to go; though she cannot understand why he wants to leave one who is so much better-looking than his wife and undergo more hardship on the stormy seas. However, she lends him the tools to build a ship and equips him, and so Ulysses sails off to Phæacia, keeping the Great Bear on the left as the Nymph enjoins. Neptune, however, on his way back from the Ethiopians, spies him, guesses that the other deities have stolen a march on him, and stirs the sea with his trident and raises a terrible storm. Ulysses is washed overboard, but Ino, in the guise of a seagull, lends him her magic veil, which keeps him up till he can swim ashore, when he throws the veil into the sea for Ino to catch it. So he comes to Phæacia, is helped by Nausicaa, daughter of King Alcinous, and hospitably entertained in the King's wonderful palace standing in its glorious garden full of fruit-trees, vines, and flowers in bloom all the year round.

Ulysses has been cast up on the shore of Phæacia unkempt and naked. And when he is met by Nausicaa, her servant maids take to their heels. But the Princess is kind and sensible. She gives him clothes and food and directs him to her father's palace. The quotation is from Butcher and Lang's translation:

> When thou art within the shadow of the halls and the court, pass quickly through the great chamber, till thou comest to my mother, who sits at the hearth in the light of the fire, weaving yarn of sea-purple stain, a wonder to behold. Her chair is leaned against a pillar, and her maidens sit behind her. And there my father's throne leans close to hers, wherein he sits and drinks his wine, like an immortal. Pass thou by him, and cast thy hands about my mother's knees, that thou mayest see quickly and with

> joy the day of thy returning, even if thou art from a very far country. If but her heart be kindly disposed toward thee, then is there hope that thou shalt see thy friends, and come to thy well-builded house, and to thine own country.

Ulysses' Adventures

The Phæacians hold games and a great feast in honour of their guest and give him presents—garments and a talent of gold to begin with—so that he can eat his supper with a glad heart. At the feast Demodocus sings the Sack of Troy and the Sally of the Greeks from the Wooden Horse, and Ulysses is so affected that he sheds tears which are perceived only by King Alcinous, who makes a speech and says the stranger ought to tell them his name. He tells his name, his home, and his amazing adventures since leaving Troy. He has sacked the city of the Cicones; he has visited the land of the lotus-eaters, where some of his men wished to tarry. "Whosoever of them did eat the honey-sweet fruit of the lotus, had no more wish to bring tidings nor to come back, but there he chose to abide with the lotus-eating men ever feeding on the lotus and forgetful of his homeward way." He has met the fearsome one-eyed Cyclops, Polyphemus, from whom he and his men escaped bound under the bellies of the ogre's sheep. He has visited Æolus, who dwelt "in a floating island," from whom he received a fair wind as a present with all the other winds in the world tied up in a bag. Unfortunately his men untied the bag and his ship was driven back to Æolus, who this time refused to receive him. He has been to the isle of Ææa, where Circe turned his men into swine. Fortunately, as Ulysses hurried through the sacred glades in the endeavour to rescue his followers, he met the god Mercury, "in the likeness of a young man with the first down on his lip," and the god gave him a herb "black at the root, but the flower was like to milk," which saved him from Circe's enchantment. With her he stayed a year and then he once more began his wanderings, his men again in human form. But the climax of all these tremendous adventures is the descent into Hades, where Ulysses talks with Tiresias, the seer, and is told of the manner of his end: "Death shall come to you very gently from the sea and shall take you when you are full of years and peace of mind." He also talks with the ghost of his mother, and hears what is happening to his wife and son and old father in Ithaca. Then Proserpine sends up the ghosts of the wives and the daughters of great kings and heroes of old time, and he makes each of them tell her story. Then he converses with the ghost of Agamemnon, who warns him not to be too open with his own wife, and of Achilles, who hears about the brave conduct of his son, Neoptolemus, in the Wooden Horse, and strides off over a meadow of asphodel, exulting in the lad's prowess. He sees Minos with his golden sceptre judging the dead; he sees Tityus, Tantalus, and Sisyphus enduring their everlasting punishments. He gazes on the mighty Hercules, bow in hand and arrow on the string, wearing about his breast his golden pictured belt.

After leaving Hades, Ulysses and his men came to the narrow strait where "on the one hand Scylla and on the other mighty Charybdis in terrible wise sucked down the salt sea water." Ulysses thus describes his last adventure:

> I kept pacing through my ship, till the surge loosened the sides from the keel, and the wave swept her along stript of her tackling, and brake her mast clean off at the keel. Now the backstay fashioned of an oxhide had been flung thereon; therewith I lashed together both keel and mast, and sitting thereon I was borne by the ruinous winds.
>
> Then verily the West Wind ceased to blow with a rushing storm, and swiftly withal the South Wind came, bringing sorrow to my soul, that so I might again measure back that space of sea, the way to deadly Charybdis. All the night was I borne, but with the rising of the sun I came to the rock of Scylla, and to dread Charybdis. Now she had sucked down her salt sea water, when I was swung up on high to the tall fig-tree, whereto I clung like a bat, and

> could find no sure rest for my feet nor place to stand, for the roots spread far below and the branches hung aloft out of reach, long and large, and overshadowed Charybdis. Steadfast I clung till she should spew forth mast and keel again; and late they came to my desire. . . . And I let myself drop down hands and feet, and plunged heavily in the midst of the waters beyond the long timbers, and sitting on these I rowed hard with my hands. . . . Thence for nine days was I borne, and on the tenth night the gods brought me nigh to the isle of Ogygia.

After he finished his story King Alcinous sends him to Ithaca with all his presents in one of the Phæacian ships that were so clever they could have found the way by themselves. So we return with him to a workaday world, where he must tread wearily to escape being slain with his son by his wife's suitors. The sections that follow are the least enthralling portion of the Homeric epics. Only his old dog recognises him at sight; and cannot follow and fawn on him, for he dies in the moment of recognition. Ulysses enters his house as a beggar and undergoes many humiliations, for unfaithful servants insult him and the suitors have little of that respect for a suppliant guest, which recognises that courtesy is the better part of charity, and is the most beautiful and homely thing in the life of the Homeric world. The irony of circumstances has its poignant moments when the destined avenger, the inexorable and irresistible warrior, is treated as a vagabond while he is preparing his plot for the destruction of the spoilers of his household—men who are blind to heaven's warnings and insolently ignore the heaven-descended rules of hospitality. When the reckoning comes, it is not a battle, but a massacre; and the vengeance Ulysses and Telemachus wreak on the unfaithful servants is an instance of "the disgusting" which the Greek dramatists abhorred as inhuman, inartistic, un-Greek. Yet the suitors were held to be punished according to their deserts, for the ill-treatment of a suppliant is one of Hesiod's five deadly sins. Ulysses and Penelope are locked in one another's arms at last, and Minerva miraculously prolongs the first night of tears and rejoicing after so many long years of hardship and sadness.

This is the story of the *Odyssey.* And after three thousand years when men read it,

> They hear like ocean on a western beach
> The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.

§ 4

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

None of the English translations of Homer have been completely successful; naturally and necessarily so, because the unique distinction of the Homeric epics is that they combine the freshness and simplicity of a primitive race, of a phase of the world's childhood, with a perfect technique of expression, a complete mastery of thought over its medium. This combination, as Matthew Arnold pointed out in his book *On Translating Homer,* involves the four chief qualities of the Homeric style: rapidity; directness of thought; plainness of diction; and nobleness. No translation, whether in verse or prose, has yet succeeded in keeping all these four qualities throughout.

Prose translations, however faithful and well-written, cannot possibly give a just impression of the poetical beauty and grandeur of the Homeric poems. The translations by famous English poets have their merits as well as their demerits; all of them fail to keep one or more of the characteristic Homeric qualities. Chapman's has several of these qualities; his fourteen-syllable line has something of the weight and movement of the Homeric hexameter; his style is plain-spoken, fresh, vigorous, and to a certain extent rapid. On the whole, it seems to deserve the noble sonnet Keats wrote in its honour. But it is full of the extravagance and fantastical humour of the Elizabethan age, and that painstaking reverence which prevented the translators of the Bible from giving rein to their fancy did not debar Chapman from "tormenting" the plain and direct thought of Homer. In Hector's famous speech at his parting from Andromache, Homer makes him say: "Nor does my own heart so bid me (to keep safe behind the walls) since I have learned to be staunch always, and to fight among the foremost of the Trojans, busy on behalf of my father's great glory and my own." In Chapman's version these plain, straightforward thoughts become:

> The spirit I first did breathe
> Did never teach me this; much less, since the contempt of death,
> Was settled in me, *and my mind knew what a worthy was,*
> *Whose office is to lead in fight, and give no danger pass*
> *Without improvement. In this fire must Hector's trial shine:*
> *Here must his country, father, friends, be in him made divine.*

See how it is all teased out into Elizabethan fantastic subtlety! Hector goes on to say: "For well I know this in my mind and in my heart, the day will be when sacred Troy shall perish." Chapman's version is:

> And such a *stormy* day shall come, in mind and soul I know,
> When sacred Troy *shall shed her towers, for tears of overthrow.*

Pope's Translation

Pope is another famous poet who has attempted the perilous task, but his literary style, better fitted for a sage's philosophising than to describe a soldier lighting his camp-fire, conveys no sense of the plain naturalness of Homer. Yet in great moments Pope is singularly successful; he then has the rapidity, the nobleness, and often the simple, unromantic language which give a partial impression of the original. A good average example of Pope's prodigious talent is this rendering of a passage in

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

"ULYSSES IN PHÆACIA," BY RUBENS

Ulysses was shipwrecked on the shore of Phæacia and was succoured by the beautiful Nausicaa, the king's daughter.

Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

"CIRCE AND THE COMPANIONS OF ULYSSES," BY BRITON RIVIÈRE, R.A.

Circe, the goddess, "fair-haired, a clever goddess, possessing human speech," changed twenty-two of the companions of Ulysses into pigs.

Sarpedon's speech quoted a few days before he died by an English statesman who had played his part in arranging that Treaty of Paris which concluded the Seven Years' War. It was Lord Grenville, who at the time (1762) expressed in Homer's words the satisfaction he felt at helping to give his country peace.

> Could all our care elude the gloomy grave
> Which claims no less the fearful than the brave,
> For lust of fame I shall not vainly dare
> In fighting fields, nor urge thy soul to war:
> But since, alas! ignoble age must come,
> Disease, and death's inexorable doom;
> The life which others pay, let us bestow,
> And give to fame what we to nature owe.

Pope is too "literary" to convey any sense of the plain thinking and plain diction of Homer, but his translation has great merits, and the modern tendency is to grant it a much higher place than that assigned by Matthew Arnold. William Cowper, that gentle and perplexed spirit, has neither the force nor the rapidity of Pope driving his heroic couplet as a Greek hero his chariot, and he is at his best in "still life" descriptions.

Lord Derby's Version

Lord Derby had not a tithe of Cowper's poetic gift, but his faithful version of the *Iliad,* an honest and untiring attempt, as he said, "to infuse into an almost literal English version something of the spirit, as well as the simplicity, of the great original," has come much closer to success than any other. An excellent example of this translation is the moving passage in which Andromache sees from the walls of Troy the desecration of her husband's corpse by the triumphant Achilles—a dreadful scene which impresses us all the more because it follows so soon after the account of the poor lady's arrangements to provide Hector with a new embroidered robe and a hot bath on his safe return from battle:

Then from the house she rushed, like one distract,
With beating heart; and with her went her maids.
But upon the tow'r she reach'd, where stood the crowd,
And mounted on the wall, and look'd around,
And saw the body trailing in the dust,
Which the fleet steeds were dragging to the ships,
And sudden darkness overspread her eyes;
Backward she fell, and gasp'd her spirit away.
Far off were flung the adornments of her head,
The net, the fillet, and the woven bands;
The nuptial veil by golden Venus given,
That day when Hector of the glancing helm
Led from Eëtion's house his wealthy bride.
The sisters of her husband round her press'd,
And held, as in the deadly swoon she lay.
But when her breath and spirit returned again,
With sudden burst of anguish thus she cried:
"Hector, oh woe is me! to misery
We both were born alike; thou here in Troy,
In Priam's royal palace; I in Thebes,
By wooded Placos, in Eëtion's house,
Who nurs'd my infancy; unhappy he,
Unhappier I! Would I had ne'er been born!"

Only a poet with Swinburne's mastery of blank verse could hope to make a nobler version of the *Iliad* than Lord Derby's, and to come nearer (yet still how far away!) to achieving the miracle of pouring the old wine of Homer's poetry into new metrical bottles.

A very interesting experiment in Homeric translations is the incomplete version of the *Odyssey* by William Morris, in which that entrancing poet displays his power of rapid and stirring narrative, his gift of creating a fresh, other-worldly atmosphere, and his sympathy with the saga spirit to great advantage. He shows us the Homeric scenes, it is true, through a misty glamour half-way between that of fairy-tales and that of the stark Northern epics. But, after all, the Homeric heroes were nearer to the Vikings in personality than any other adventurers of literature—they might almost be defined as types midway between the Northmen and the Normans, for the history revealed by picks rather than by pens clearly shows that they had entered into the material civilisation of others to possess it, and to enjoy a luxury and a lavishness which was in advance of their spiritual growth. The moment when the suitors of Penelope are visited by a sudden sense of impending doom, only understood by Theoclymenus, is thus presented by the author of *The Earthly Paradise:*

So he spake; but Pallas Athene amidst the wooers' crew
Awoke undying laughter, and their minds astray she drew;
For now all they were laughing with the jaws of other men,
And flesh bloodstained they were eating, and the eyes of them as
then
Were filled with tears, and the thoughts of their souls into sorrow
strayed.
Then the godlike Theoclymenus he spake to them and said:
"Why bear ye this bale, ye unhappy? For your heads and your
faces outright,
And the knees that are beneath you are wrapt about in night,
And let loose is the voice of wailing, and wetted with tears are
your cheeks,
And blood the hall-walls staineth and the goodly panels streaks;
And the porch is full of man-shapes and fulfilled is the garth of
the stead,
As they went 'neath the dusk and the darkness, and the sun from
the heavens is dead;
And lo! how the mist of evil draws up and all about!"

Certainly we get the same eerie impression of an omen, felt as a warning only by the righteous man, which is communicated in Homer's actual words. This Morrisian version is unequalled for the vigour and luminous quality of all its open-air passages. Some critics take exception to the occasional somewhat undignified and harsh renderings of stock epithets and are jarred when the man of many wiles is styled "the shifty." But it seems to have all the merits of Chapman's translation and to lack the latter's all-pervading fault—the teasing-out of the plain thought of the original and the elaboration of its plain diction into Elizabethan subtlety and ornateness.

Those who wish to get as clear an insight into the noble lucidness of Homeric poetry (which, none the less, is like a diamond in that it cannot be seen through) as is possible without a knowledge of Greek cannot do better than procure Lord Derby's and William Morris's translations, of which inexpensive editions can be procured.

Butcher and Lang

As for prose translations, they abound, and, though uncouth in proportion to their literal precision, will help the student to follow the Homeric narrative in exact detail. Butcher and Lang's translation of the *Odyssey* at times rises to prose-poetry. And the curiously matter-of-fact translation in prose (at times too prosaic) by Samuel Butler, the great ironist and author of *Erewhon,* is an excellent tonic against the conventional "translatorese" which lends an air of unreality to the very real and easily realised life of the Homeric poems. Butler's attempted proof that the *Odyssey* was written by a woman, none other than the wise and beautiful Nausicaa, must have been begun as an essay in his peculiar irony, but he seems in the end to have persuaded himself of the truth of his fantastical theory.

5

HOMERIC SIMILES

The use of simile in the Homeric poems is a characteristic feature which has been imitated by all makers of the "artificial epic" from Virgil to Milton. The Homeric similes are not mere decorations, like the pictures in an illuminated missal. They are dramatic; that is, they arise out of the action and add impressiveness to what follows, by leading the thoughts of the reader up through some similar, but less familiar, picture to a keener realisation of the wonder or terror or pitifulness of a

Photo: Rischgitz Collection

"THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS," BY RUBENS

(National Gallery, London.)

Paris had to decide which goddess was the most beautiful—Juno, Minerva, or Venus. He gave the golden apple to Venus, with the natural result that the other two goddesses became his bitter enemies.

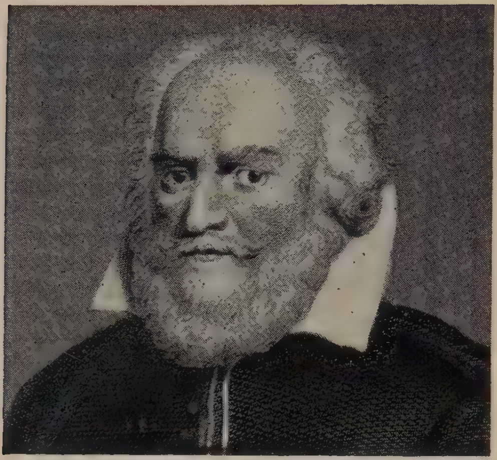

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

GEORGE CHAPMAN

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

HOMER, "THE GREAT BLIND FATHER OF SONG," BY HARRY BATES scene or an event. They are like the illustrations to a book the inner significance of which has been grasped by the illustrator, who yet allows his imagination to sport with the details of his picture. "Secure of the main likeness," comments Pope, "Homer makes no scruple to play with the circumstances." His similes thus afford a contrast to those in the Old Testament (for example, Job's comparison of the inconstancy of friends to the failure of water in the desert, when springs on which the caravans relied are found to be dry), for the Hebraic similes dispense with non-essential details. The *Iliad* contains about a hundred and eighty full-length similes, pictures complete in themselves, and the *Odyssey* only forty. This difference is inevitable, for the *Odyssey,* though full of marvels and marvellous adventures, has not nearly so many moments of tense excitement—dramatic "thrills" as it were—as the *Iliad* with its warlike action and movements of armed hosts in a restricted arena.

The range of Homeric simile extends from the lowliest to the loftiest matters. Like the Old Testament writers, Homer delights in a homely image; thus, like them, he finds similitudes in the work of the threshing flood and the winnowing fan. The Hebrew chronicler (in 2 Kings xxi. 13) writes: "I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish; wiping it, and turning it upside down"; and Homer finds as homely a similitude, when he compares the obstinate Ajax, beset by enemies, to an ass which has got into a cornfield and is being cudgelled in vain by boys. Sometimes Homer uses a sequence of similes; as when, in a description of the Greeks leaving the quarters by the ships for the place of assembly, they are successively likened to fire devouring a forest (because of their gleaming armour), to a flight of clamouring birds (because of their noise and haste), to innumerable leaves (when they are mustered in a fluctuating mass), to buzzing flies (as an excited hum is heard from the assembly), and to flocks of goats parted by goat-herds (when they are marshalled in divisions by their leaders).

Again, in order to heighten the terror of warlike episodes by contrasting them with small, innocent affairs, he tells us that Apollo throws down the Greek rampart as easily as a child destroys its sand-castle on the sea-beach, or makes Achilles rebuke his comrade Petroclus for weeping like a little girl running by her mother's side and clinging to her dress, and looking up in tears until she is picked up and carried.

Majestical Similes

His more majestical images are suggested by fire—especially, conflagrations in a mountain forest—torrents, snowstorms, lightning, and winds battling together as so often occurs in the land-locked Ægean. A fine example of the majestical simile is found when Minerva invests Achilles with her ægis, thus encircling his head with a golden cloud from which a flame is made to shoot forth. The Rev. W. C. Green's translation of *The Similes of Homer's Iliad* contains the following fine version of this most striking simile:

> As from an island city, seen afar,
> The smoke goes up to heaven, when foes besiege:
> And all day long in grievous battle strive
> The leaguered townsmen from this city wall:
> But soon, at set of sun, blaze after blaze,
> Are lit the beacon-fires, and high the glare
> Shoots up for all that dwell around to see,
> That they may come with ships to aid their stress:
> Such light blazed heavenward from Achilles' head.

The lion, by the way, provides no fewer than thirty comparisons in the *Iliad,* the most notable of which likens Ajax, defending the body of Patroclus, to a lion guarding his cubs, glaring in his might and drawing down his brows. These similes are often jewels of history. The image of the beleaguered island-city, kindling its fiery S.O.S. to bring help from its neighbours, reminds us that it was an age when such raids were common, as waves of armed emigrants came down overland from Central Europe and, having built or seized ships, sought to acquire footholds in the Southern seas by piratical attacks. And the frequency of leonine similes tells us by implication that the lion was a familiar beast on the mainland—a fact confirmed by Herodotus and Xenophon, who state that he was still met with in Macedonia, Thessalay, and Thrace in the fifth century B.C. Homer indeed gives us history as well as a story, and we are now in a position, thanks to the wonderful results of excavation since Schliemann's epoch-making discoveries, to detach the historical from the legendary and imaginative matter, and to make a picture, correct in its main outlines, of the real Homeric world. Homer, the book, is not an artistic myth; it is the record, howsoever distorted and overlaid and "restored," of a life that was actually lived by men more like than unlike ourselves.

§ 6

THE HOMERIC WORLD

Something must be said as to the great controversy started by Wolf's *Prolegomena* (published at Halle in 1795) as to the way in which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* came into being and attained their present form. Wolf's theory was an expression of the all-questioning spirit that, in the domain of politics, broke out with explosive force in the French Revolution, and, in the sphere of historical criticism, prompted Ihne and Niebuhr to show the legendary nature of the early annals of Rome. It attempted to prove four main points. The author contended that (1) the Homeric poems were composed without the aid of writing, which is not mentioned in them and, in 950 B.C., was either unknown to the Greeks or not yet used in the making of literary records, and that the poems out of which the two epics were made up, were passed on by oral recitation, during which process they were much altered; (2) when written down, about

550 B.C., "revisers" and literary critics went on polishing the poems and altering them to suit their tastes in art; (3) the artistic unity of both epics is the result of this artificial treatment in later ages; (4) the original lays out of which the epics are built up were the work of several authors, though it would never be possible to show where the component parts begin and end.

There is nothing dogmatic in Wolf's famous book (which is written in Latin), and he did not deny the existence of a personal Homer, a poet of genius who "began the weaving of the web." Moreover, he admits that the argument convinced his head but not his heart, so to speak. Turning from his theory to read the poems once more as poetry, plunging into the clear rushing stream of the story yet again, the harmonious consistency of it all renews the old irresistible impression of a personal unity, and he is angry with the reasoned scepticism which has destroyed his belief in a single master-poet. Into the controversial maze created by his book it is impossible to enter here. The ancient conception of authorship must be abandoned; it is comparable with the faith of simple folk who believe that the Bible in its present form was handed down out of Heaven. The very name "Homer," which means "piecer-together," is sufficient proof that the belief in a single authorship, one and indivisible, cannot be maintained. And every part of the poems bears the marks of revision; for example, it is abundantly clear that barbaric episodes have been toned down to suit the taste of later and gentler ages when the Greek horror of "the disgusting" had so prevailed as to insist that murders should take place off the stage.

In the long and still unsettled controversy as to the origin and authorship, the poets—and the professional scholars in whom something of a poet survives—have always leant to the side of personal unity. In England the impression has always prevailed, and is perhaps gathering force to-day, that less importance is to be attached to the discrepancies with which the scholar-critic is chiefly concerned than to the sympathetic insight of men of poetic genius such as Schiller, who called Wolf's theory "barbaric," and Goethe, who, though at first inclined to accept it, on second thought said in a letter to Schiller: "I am more than ever convinced of the unity and indivisibility of the poem (the *Iliad*)." The opinion of Matthew Arnold, a ripe scholar as well as a poet full of the Greek spirit, is weighty indeed:

> The insurmountable obstacle to believing the *Iliad* a consolidated work of several poets is this—that the work of great masters is unique; and the *Iliad* has a great master's genuine stamp, and that stamp is *the grand style.*

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The beginner studying Homer will do well to read such books as W. E. Gladstone's *Homer,* and Sir R. C. Jebb's *Homer: an Introduction to the Iliad and Odyssey;* and also the excellent volumes on the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* by the Rev. W. Lucas Collins.

Other books are:

Dr. Walter Leaf's *A Companion to the Iliad for English Readers; Homer and History;* and *Troy, a Study in Homeric Geography.*

Andrew Lang's *Homer and his Age; Homer and the Epic;* and *The World of Homer.*

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Mention must also be made of the two books by Samuel Butler (the author of *Erewhon*), *The Authoress of the Odyssey,* in which Butler expresses the view that the Odyssey was written by a woman, and *The Humour of Homer.*

Important modern translations of Homer are:

The Iliad done into English Prose, by Andrew Lang, Walter Leaf, and Ernest Myers.

The Odyssey done into English Prose, by S. H. Butcher and Andrew Lang.

The Iliad in English Verse, by A. S. Way (2 vols.)

The Odyssey in English Verse, by A. S. Way.

Other modern translations are: *The Odyssey translated into English Verse,* by J. W. Mackail; *The Odyssey translated into English in the Original Metre,* by Francis Caulfeild; *The Odyssey, a line for line translation, in the Metre of the Original,* by H. B. Cotterill. William Morris, the famous author of "The Earthly Paradise," translated the "Odyssey" into English verse (Longmans), while Samuel Butler, author of *Erewhon* and *The Way of All Flesh,* did a prose version of the "Odyssey."

There are, of course, many older translations, notably, Alexander Pope's versions of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," the renderings of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" by George Chapman, the Elizabethan poet and dramatist, William Cowper's (the poet) English blank verse translation of the "Iliad," of which there is, apparently, no modern edition. The American poet, William Cullen Bryant, did a blank verse version of the "Iliad" and Sir John F. W. Herschel a version of the "Iliad" in English hexameters.

There is also the version of the "Iliad" in English blank verse by Edward, Earl of Derby and the translation of the "Odyssey" in 2 vols. in the Loeb Classical Library.

III

THE STORY OF THE BIBLE

BY E. W. BARNES, Sc.D., F.R.S., CANON OF WESTMINSTER

THE STORY OF THE BIBLE

BY E. W. BARNES, Sc.D., F.R.S., CANON OF WESTMINSTER

THE collection of ancient books which we call the Bible is of incomparable value and importance. It has done more for the moral and religious progress of mankind than any other literature. As a record of the most significant process in human civilisation, of clear thought and right feeling developing together for a thousand years, it is unique. Some books in it reach levels of artistic excellence which have never been surpassed. And, moreover, the translation into English which we know as the Authorised Version is the foremost classic in our language.

If we inquire why the Bible can be regarded as a single surpassingly great book, the answer must be that there is in it unity, no less than sincerity, beauty, and strength. It has really but one theme—man's search for God. Behind history and poetry, prophecy and drama, gospel and epistle, there lies an intense eagerness to understand God's ways, to realise His nature, to feel His presence. Yet, fortunately, the Bible is not a collection of theological treatises. It is as varied as the life of man, a mirror of human endurance and weakness, triumph and failure. Above all it is a living history of spiritual progress. For this reason, from end to end of the Bible, there are books and passages of supreme excellence. They were written by men passionately in earnest, inspired by a pure and lofty faith, and convinced that they bore a great message for mankind. Consequently the language of these men is clear and simple, their thought direct and vigorous. Like all great artists they are economical, sparing in their use of words. Their work has a quality which "finds" us, a something which we term inspiration. Coleridge, who loved the Bible and was more than ordinarily sensitive to its appeal, said of it: "In every generation and wherever the light of revelation has shone, men of all ranks, conditions, and states of mind have found in the Bible a correspondent for every movement towards the better felt in their own hearts."

A Book of Many Books

We must always remember that the Bible is not one book: it is many. In the Old Testament there is the best literature produced by the Hebrew race during well-nigh a thousand years. The New Testament, on the other hand, contains the literature, not of a nation, but of a movement. It is a collection of Greek works, written within less than a century, which describe the life of Jesus of Nazareth and the early development of the Christian Faith. But the connection between the Old and New Testaments is intimate. Each is a product of Hebrew religious genius. Of the writers in the New Testament, all seem to have been Jews, save possibly St. Luke, and his racial origin is doubtful. Moreover, to the historian, Christ is in the direct line of the great Hebrew prophets. St. Paul, though he became the Apostle to the Gentiles, thought as a Jew and not as a Greek. St. John used Greek ideas, but he was a spiritual descendant of Ezekiel. Christianity, in fact, was a natural outgrowth of Judaism.

To the student of history and of religious thought, the New Testament is the most important part of the Bible; yet, as literature, it is on the whole inferior to the earlier writings. By the time of Christ, the Greek language, as spoken by the Jews of the Levant, had lost its purity. Not even the sincerity and

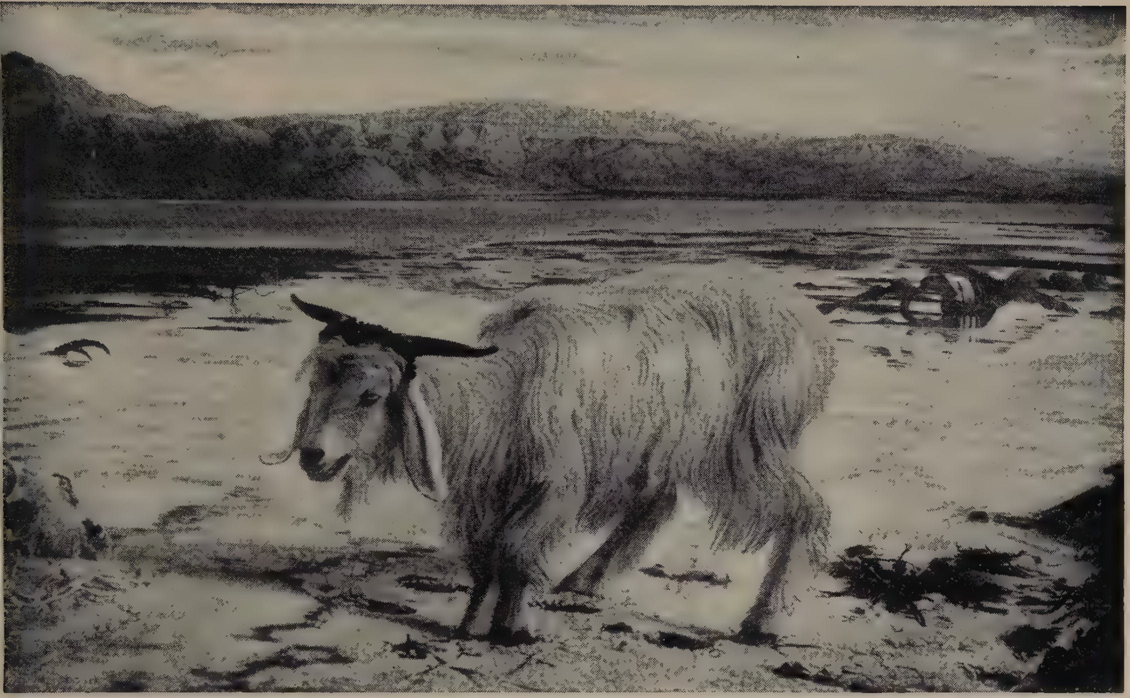
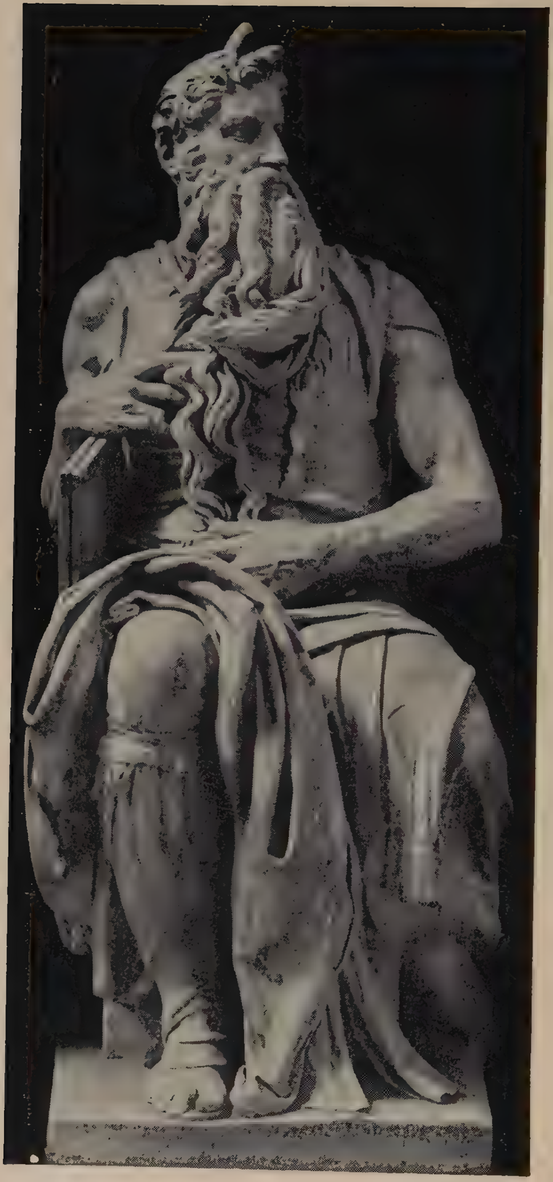


Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE SCAPEGOAT," BY W. HOLMAN HUNT

In this picture the artist has painted the desert from which the Hebrews originally came. He depicts the "purple crags of Moab and the pale ashes of Gomorrah."



MOSES: PROPHET, LAWGIVER, STATESMAN, AS CONCEIVED BY MICHAEL ANGELO enthusiasm of the New Testament writers could make it a perfect medium for literary art. Moreover, between words and thought a natural harmony exists only if the ideas which a people develop are expressed in their own tongue. When Jewish religious understanding was poured into a Greek mould, such harmony was marred. Throughout the New Testament there are passages which are astonishingly fine; but, speaking generally, we miss the sustained excellence of many Old Testament books. Wordsworth said truly that "the grand storehouses of enthusiastic and meditative imagination . . . are the prophetical and lyrical parts of the Holy Scriptures." Because we describe such storehouses and show how they were built and filled, we shall of necessity give to the New Testament less consideration than its intrinsic importance merits. It would be foreign to our present purpose to discuss the Christian faith. We seek to show why the Bible is a classic of literature, permanently enjoyable and permanently helpful; why a distinguished agnostic like Huxley could call it "the Magna Charta of the poor and the oppressed."

§ 1

THE ISRAELITES

The People of the Old Testament

Who were the people who made the Old Testament, and whence came their religious genius? The beginning of Egyptian history, so far as our present knowledge goes, can be placed about 5000 B.C. Two thousand years later there were in Babylonia and Egypt two empires, already highly civilised, well-organised, and powerful. For some time a race called the Sumerians held the country of the Euphrates. They ceased to be dominant and their place was taken by Semites. To the Semitic stock the nomad tribes of desert Arabia belonged. Possibly there was some Semitic blood also among the people of

Egypt; but the differences which separate Babylonian and Egyptian art, letters, and thought point to fundamental differences of racial origin. Between the empires of the Euphrates and the Nile there lay the Arabian desert and a small stretch of fertile country near the Mediterranean, anciently called Canaan, which we now know as Palestine. The Canaanites, who inhabited the land, were also Semites; and at a remote date Babylonian influence over Canaan was dominant. Then there came a time when Egypt expanded her borders and conquered Canaan. Some famous letters discovered in 1887 at Tell-el-Amarna belong approximately to the period 1400–1370 B.C.[1] From them we learn that Canaan at that time had been an elaborately organised province, paying taxes to Egypt; but that all was falling into disorder because Egypt's power was waning. About the year 1230 B.C. "certain clans of a nomad race known as Hebrews, on whom some of the Pharaohs had imposed forced labour, broke away from Egypt under the leadership of Moses, and returned to their nomadic life in the oases of the desert south of Palestine." These clans, whom we also know as the children of Israel, were Semites, closely akin in language and customs to the Canaanites and to many tribes of the Arabian desert. They were probably but small; it may even be that the men in them did not number more than a few thousands.[2] They lived for a generation in the wilderness and then set out to conquer the fertile country of Canaan. Their task was made possible by the fact that Egyptian rule over Canaan was at an end. But, though they established themselves firmly in the hilly country, the Canaanites continued to hold the plains. A long period of war and disorder only ceased when, under the Israelite king, David, Canaanites and Israelites were fused into one people. After the year 1000 B.C. Hebrew culture, and especially Hebrew religion, were nominally dominant.

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[1] These letters, for the most part, are in the Assyrian language, and written in cuneiform characters. They were addressed to the Egyptian kings Amen-hotep III and IV; and were found in the tomb of a secretary to those monarchs. The tomb is near the Nile, about 180 miles south of Memphis.

[2] It is always necessary to be cautious in accepting numbers given in ancient documents. Errors, due to carelessness of copyists and other causes, are very likely to arise. Professor Flinders Petrie has examined the census lists of the Israelite tribes given in the Book of Numbers, chapters 1 and 26. He makes the ingenious suggestion that *alā̆f* has two meanings, a "thousand" and "a group"; and therefore, when we have the figure 32,200, it originally meant 32 tents containing 200 people. He thus reaches the conclusion that the numbers of Israelites in the two lists are respectively 5,500 and 5,730.

About the same time that the Hebrews entered Canaan, the Philistines seem to have conquered the maritime plain near Gaza. These Philistines were not Semites but Aryan seafarers. Probably they came from the coast of Asia Minor near Crete, that centre of an early and wonderful civilisation revealed by the discoveries of Sir Arthur Evans. Old Testament history shows plainly that David used the Philistines in establishing his kingdom; and archæologists hold that through Philistine influence "a remnant of the dying glories of Crete" contributed to the progress of Hebrew culture.

Moses

Whence did the Hebrews get their religion, and what was its original character? The questions are difficult to answer. Renan asserted that the Semite of the desert, "living where nature is so uniform, must be a monotheist." But there is no evidence for this theory; and all other Semites, when they reached countries like Syria and the Euphrates valley where nature is luxuriant, quickly developed an elaborate and sometimes gross polytheism. We must accept the Biblical tradition that in the wilderness, from Moses, the Hebrews received the germ of that moral monotheism which has been of incalculable value to mankind. Moses must have been supremely great, a natural leader of men and a religious genius. His mind must have been creative, his character austere, his religious insight profound. As the Hebrew prophets, from Elijah in the ninth century onwards, developed Hebrew monotheism, they believed themselves to be the true heirs of the Mosaic tradition. Their strength lay in their conviction that they were fighting to preserve the best elements of Israelite culture from contamination by ideas and practices of Canaanite origin.

It cannot be held that Moses had derived his religion from Egypt. The Egyptians practised circumcision; but Moses, and those of his followers who were born in the wilderness, were uncircumcised. Further, the prophets believed that they were true to the teaching of Moses in proclaiming that Jehovah was God of the whole earth; and most certainly there is no echo in the Ten Commandments of the many gods of Egyptian polytheism. Nowhere does the difference between Egyptian and Israelite religion appear more markedly than in connection with the doctrine of a future life. Neither in the teaching of Moses, nor in that of any great Hebrew prophet before the year 600 B.C., is there mention of a life after death or of judgment to come; but Egyptian religion is dominated by such beliefs. In fact, the originality of Moses, the independence of his religious insight, his direct inspiration, appear unchallengeable. When the Jews in later ages appealed to the authority of Moses, they rightly claimed that Moses was the source of the faith that made the Jewish nation.

Professor Kennett believes that monogamy was an element in the ethical system of Moses. "There is not a hint, in any of the prophets, to suggest that they approved of polygamy, and there are several passages that imply monogamy. Here, again, it is probable that the prophets' ideas about marriage belong to the general tradition of the teaching of Moses."

The earlier books of the Bible result from so many combinations and alterations at different times that it is hard to form a definite opinion as to this and many other questions. For instance, we find it difficult to show conclusively that Moses was a monotheist. The first commandment, "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have none other gods but me," proves that the Hebrews were to worship Jehovah and Him alone. But was He

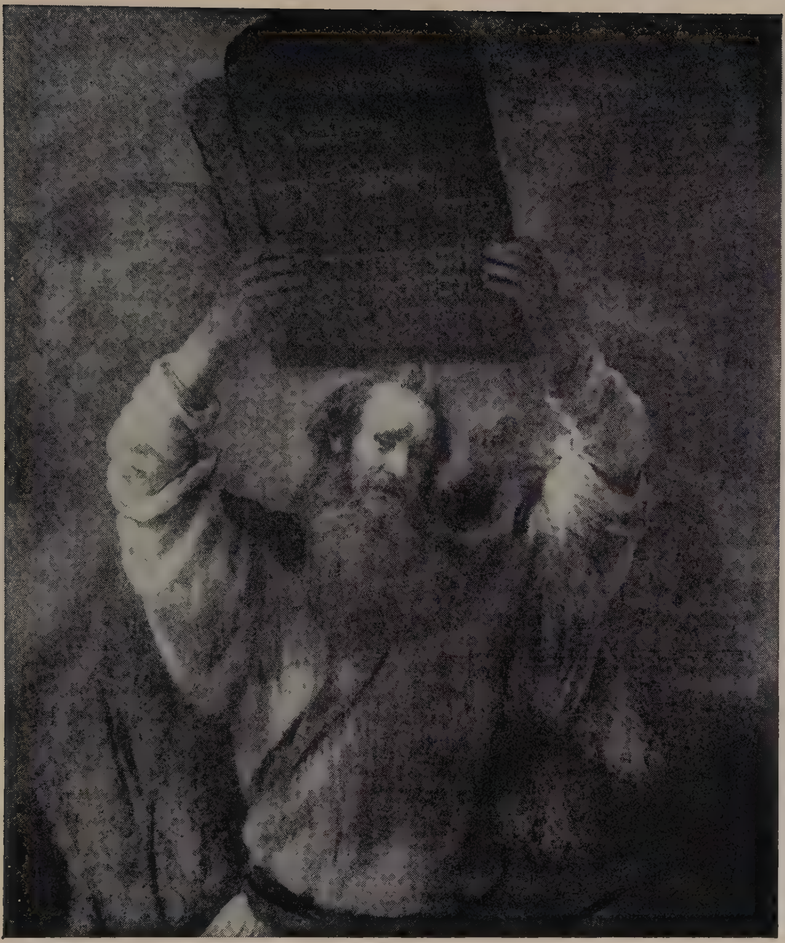

Photo: Braun, Clément & Co.

"MOSES BREAKING THE TABLES OF THE LAW," BY REMBRANDT VAN RŸN

Moses, alike prophet, lawgiver, and statesman, prepared the way for Hebrew unity and Hebrew monotheism.

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"AND THERE WAS A GREAT CRY IN EGYPT," BY ARTHUR HACKER, A.R.A.

In the Feast of the Passover the Jews still commemorate the death of the first-born which preceded their exodus from Egypt.

merely the God of the Hebrews, just as other nations had their tribal gods; or was He the one and only God of the whole earth? Probably Moses, like the great prophets in subsequent centuries, held the latter view; but popular opinion, after the fusion of the Israelite and Canaanite races, thought it natural that different peoples should have different gods. So, apparently without offending public opinion, Solomon built "an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the mount that is before Jerusalem," together with other altars to heathen deities. Alike in this action and in his polygamy we see popular Canaanite custom struggling successfully against the higher Israelite ideal. So far from being surprised at this uprising we remain amazed that it was not permanently successful. The census statistics of David and Rehoboam indicate that the population of the early monarchy was 1,300,000. A few thousand Israelites of the Exodus could not possibly have increased to such a number in a couple of centuries. The people over whom David ruled must have been largely of non-Israelite origin, and the Bible records tell us explicitly that in his army foreigners were numerous. In fact, "the numbers of Israel were enlarged by accretion." May we not deem it "providential" that Hebrew religion in Palestine did not suffer the same sort of corruption as the religion which the Aryan invaders brought into ancient India?

To understand the Hebrew prophets and their fierce indignation against Canaanite worship we must bear in mind that with such worship was associated the religious immorality which disgraces Southern Indian temples at the present day. They were fired by a moral indignation against cruelty and lust. The Canaanites and Phœnicians spoke practically the same language as the Hebrews: all were Semites. "Hannibal is just 'the grace of Baal.' Put Jah (Jehovah) for Baal, and you have the Hebrew Hananiah; or, reverse the word, and you have Johanan, the Greek Ioannes and our John." But Phœnicians and Carthaginians had no ethical or religious message for mankind. The practice of human sacrifice was in earlier times not unknown among either them or the Canaanites; and in their temples obscene idols and religious prostitution went together. Had Carthage conquered Rome it would have been a curse to human civilisation. That Christianity conquered the Roman Empire was a blessing to mankind. The difference between the blessing and the curse measures the importance of the work of the Hebrew prophets. The Old Testament, read aright, is the story of their work and its outcome.

§ 2

THE BEGINNING OF THE BIBLE: THE LAW

The Books of the Old Testament

To read the Old Testament aright we must know when, and by whom, its books were written. The first part of the Old Testament to be regarded as peculiarly sacred and inspired was "The Law," the first five books of the Bible. These books, as we all know, are *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers,* and *Deuteronomy.* In our Bibles they are, in their titles, ascribed to Moses. We begin with "the first book of Moses called Genesis." The Jews, in the time of Christ, also ascribed these books to Moses; but they did not then bear our modern titles. *Genesis* was denoted merely by its first words, "In the beginning." Until a century ago the belief lasted that Moses wrote practically the whole Pentateuch. There is now an almost complete agreement among scholars that it took its present form after the Exile of the Jews and before the return of Ezra, that is to say, between the years 600 B.C. and 450 B.C. The Law was probably promulgated by Ezra soon after he came to Jerusalem from Babylon, and was speedily deemed authoritative and sacred. Moreover, modern scholars are convinced that, in the Pentateuch, there is little that goes back to the time of Moses. It is, in its present form, the result of a series of religious reformations; and the whole framework was constructed by a school of Priestly writers in Babylonia during the Exile.

These views differ so widely from those which were formerly accepted that many who have not weighed the evidence regard them as fanciful. The whole of the evidence can only be marshalled in an elaborate treatise; but a single important illustration may show its strength. Under the final system described in the Book of Leviticus all religious worship was concentrated at Jerusalem. There were no local altars or shrines where sacrifices could be offered to God. "If Moses had left such a system as a public code specially entrusted to the priests and leaders of the nation, that code must have influenced at least the *élite* of Israel." But the prophets before the Captivity know nothing of it. Even when Solomon built the Temple at Jerusalem, he did not conform to the law of Leviticus. The two brazen pillars which stood at the porch would have been forbidden by that law, for they were pagan emblems common in Canaanite and Phœnician religion. For centuries also the keepers of the sanctuary were uncircumcised foreigners and not "sons of Levi," as the law ordained. There is, in short, overwhelming proof that before the Exile the law of Leviticus was not merely disregarded: it was unknown.

When such a result has been reached, the way is open for a right understanding of the Pentateuch. This understanding has been reached by an elaborate study of the literary styles of the various writers and groups of writers whose work survives; by paying attention to the use of critical words, such as those for "God"; by investigating the development of religious ritual and thought; and by minute antiquarian research. A language changes as the centuries go by: we cannot write like Swift or Addison, nor could they write like Shakespeare, nor Shakespeare like Chaucer. Of course, there is always some uncertainty in literary analysis; but the main outlines of the following sketch may be accepted with a large measure of confidence.

Probably that part of the Old Testament which has the closest connection with Moses is the *Book of the Covenant,* preserved in Exodus, chapters 20–23. It contains, besides the Ten Commandments, "a few simple rules for worship, allowing freedom to meet God at many altars and giving no direction as to who shall perform the priestly service." There are also simple civil laws, in which justice and kindness are happily combined.

The Priestly Writers

A large part of the more interesting material in the Book of Genesis is due to two writers, whom scholars call J and E. These symbols stand for *"Judœan"* and *"Ephraimite"* respectively, and mean that they belonged to south and north Israel. J probably flourished about the middle of the ninth century B.C., and E somewhat less than a century later. "Of all Hebrew historians J is the most gifted and the most brilliant. He excels in the power of delineating life and character. In ease and grace his narratives are unsurpassed. He writes without effort, and without conscious art." To him we owe the story of Eden and the Fall, of Abraham's pleading for Sodom, of the wooing of Rebekah. E does not write so brilliantly as J. He has not the same felicity of expression or poetic vigour. To him is due the history of Joseph in Egypt. But the story of the selling of Joseph with its many inconsistencies is the result of a somewhat artless combination of narratives of J and E, which differed in that each assigned the blame of the transaction to ancestors of the other. The story of the Flood is similarly full of inconsistencies. Its present form results from combining a story of J with material due to a *group of writers whom scholars call P.* These men supplied the whole framework of the Pentateuch, and gave it its final form. They were priests, living in Babylonia during the Exile; conscientious, prosaic annalists. They describe with relish the different ceremonial institutions of the Hebrews. They take a consistent pleasure in chronological and other

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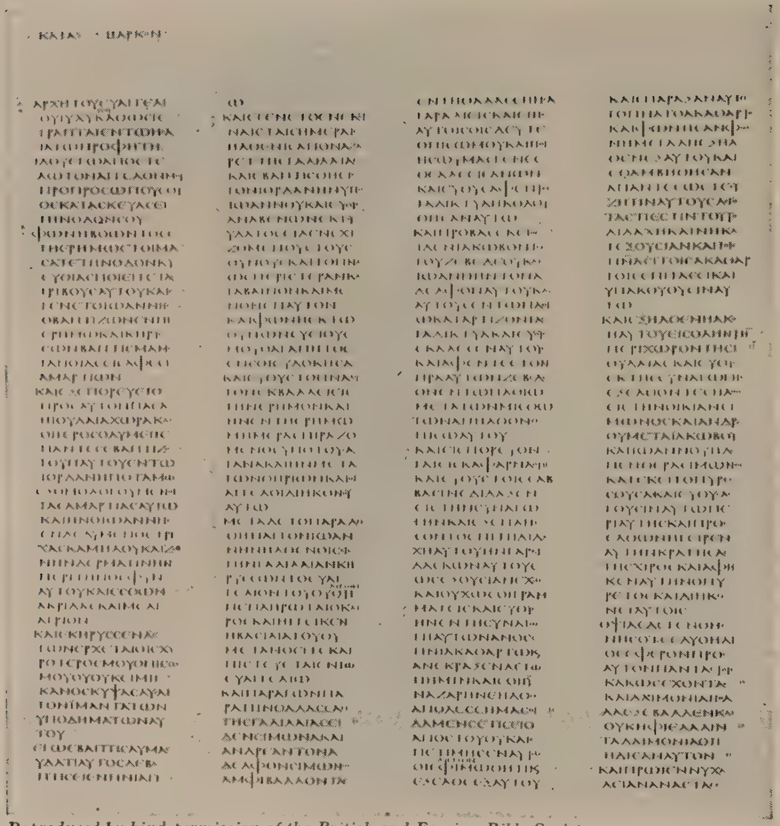
"JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S DREAMS," BY HAROLD SPEED

Under the great eighteenth dynasty in Egypt Semitic influence was strong. The story of Joseph preserved the memory of this epoch in Hebrew tradition.



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A PAGE OF THE *Codex Sinaiticus*

This Codex is one of the oldest manuscripts of the Greek Bible, and was written about A.D. 380.

statistical data. Whenever we come across a passage beginning "These are the generations of . . . ," we may safely assume that it is the handiwork of P.

One of the Priestly writers was the author of the opening chapter of the Bible, where his style is unmistakable. There is a second and not wholly consistent account of Creation given in Genesis, chapter 2 (vv. 4–7). This is due to J, and so is some three centuries older than P's narrative. The first Creation story probably reflects the influence of Babylonian scientific speculation. Though the progressive development of modern science has rendered it obsolete, it is worthy of our respect, and its noble monotheistic setting is of enduring value.

In thus describing the work of P, we have passed over an earlier writer to whom the most valuable part of the Pentateuch is due. This is *D, the author of the great sermon ascribed to Moses which makes the book Deuteronomy.* J and E may be regarded as forerunners of the first succession of prophets, Amos, Hosea, and Micah. D is, in language and thought, closely allied to Jeremiah; and he must have lived about the year 650 B.C. His work was almost certainly the book discovered "in the house of God by Hilkiah in the year 621 B.C.," which served as a basis for the reformation of Jewish religion under King Josiah. Written very likely when the heathen reaction under King Manasseh seemed finally to have destroyed the fine religious tradition which went back to Moses, Deuteronomy shows rich and true spiritual insight. Ritual, indeed, has developed since the Book of the Covenant; but formalism has not quenched the fire of the spirit. We must not assume that D, in writing his book, created legislation unheard of before. He probably gathered together what he regarded as the best developments of the past, combined them with exhortations due to his own religious fervour, and then passed away leaving his book as a legacy to a happier time. Christians will never forget that from it comes the first half of the Golden Rule. "Hear, O Israel, the

Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

Alongside the Book of Deuteronomy we may put an ancient document embedded in the Book of Leviticus, chapters 17–26. This is called by scholars the *Law of Holiness.* It has been altered by the Priestly editors of the Pentateuch, but there are many indications which point to the influence of the prophet Ezekiel. It resembles the Book of the Covenant in that the laws in it are in the main addressed to the people, not to the priest. Its religious inspiration is magnificent. In it we find the second half of the Golden Rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Throughout the ages mystics have felt the appeal of its words, "And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people"; and the mission of Israel to humanity was never more finely expressed than in the sentence, "And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples that ye should be mine."

For the convenience of readers we give a short table to show the main sources from which the Pentateuch was constructed.

Book of the Covenant	Simple civil and religious laws of great antiquity.	Origin probably with Moses about 1200 B.C.
J . .	A historian of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.	About 850 B.C.
E . .	A historian of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.	About 780 B.C.
D . .	The writer who inspired the reformation under King Josiah and to whom the Book of Deuteronomy is due.	About 650 B.C.
Law of Holiness	A code of ritual and civil law of great religious value, probably compiled by a friend or follower of Ezekiel.	About 570 B.C.
P . .	The school of writers in Babylonia who finally gave the Pentateuch its present form.	Between 550 and 450 B.C.

§ 3

THE GROWTH OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Hebrew Bible began with *"The Law."* To understand its further growth we must recognise that the order of the Old Testament books in our Bibles is not that which a strict Jew in the time of Christ would have deemed satisfactory. We shall later mention some of the great translations of the Hebrew scriptures into foreign languages. It is sufficient now to say that the standard Jewish translation into Greek is called the Septuagint; and the standard Christian translation into Latin, the Vulgate. Roughly speaking, the order of the books of the Old Testament in English Bibles is that of the Vulgate. This order in turn was derived from the Septuagint, the authors of which apparently tried to group the books according to their subject-matter. They thus obscured a distinction between two groups of books which in the time of Christ was of real importance. They mixed up the group known as *"The Prophets"* with the group called *"The Writings."*

"The Prophets" was the Jewish description of the following group of books:

Joshua
Judges
Samuel 1 and 2
Kings 1 and 2
Jeremiah
Ezekiel
Isaiah
Twelve Minor Prophets

It thus contained, according to Jewish reckoning, eight books. We have to remember that these "books" were written on rolls of parchment or papyrus; eight such rolls of fairly convenient size made up "The Prophets," just as five rolls made up "The Law."

"The Writings" was the description of the group formed by the remaining books in the English Old Testament, namely:

Ruth
Psalms
Job
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

Lamentations
Daniel
Esther
Ezra and Nehemiah
Chronicles 1 and 2

This group thus contained eleven "books"; and the total number of books of the Hebrew Bible was thus twenty-four.

It seems at first sight mere pedantry to spend time in separating "The Prophets" from "The Writings." But in the time of Christ "The Writings" had not won the same sort of recognition as was given to the Law and the Prophets. *They could not be read as Scripture at the Synagogue services.* They were on trial, as it were, slowly establishing a claim to be regarded as equally sacred and inspired. When Christ said, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets," He implied that the one command summed up the whole of Bible teaching. For such teaching it was not necessary to go to "The Writings."

§ 4

THE PROPHETS

Eight, or according to our reckoning twenty-one, books made up the group called "The Prophets." When were they first regarded as Scripture? The process was, no doubt, gradual. Pious Jews, who venerated the Law, found in the Prophets spiritual inspiration which deepened the religious meaning of the Temple ritual which the Law had established. The Law was primarily ecclesiastical; but religious men are seldom satisfied solely by an ecclesiastical system. They demand the witness of history to God, records of personal faith and the fire of prophetic enthusiasm. Whenever religion is earnest, the Prophet takes his place by the side of the Priest. So, gradually but irresistibly, "the Prophets" supplemented "the Law." Probably during the third century B.C. a lesson from the one group of books was added to a lesson from the other in the synagogue services,

DAVID, THE GREATEST OF THE HEBREW KINGS

Michael Angelo has here depicted the Jewish hero in his youthful prime.

Photo: Anderson.

From Michael Angelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican.

ISAIAH: THE STATESMAN AND PROPHET ROUND WHOSE NAME THE FINEST RELIGIOUS LITERATURE OF JUDAISM WAS GATHERED just as in Christian churches a lesson from the New Testament follows a lesson from the Old. By 250 B.C. the Prophets seem to have become Scripture. Henceforth the history and preaching of the men who had kept inviolate all that was best in the faith of Moses, who during centuries of struggle had developed the finest monotheism the world has known—such history and preaching were sacred.

The Loss of Early Documents

There is confusion in the varied literature which makes up "The Prophets." The books of *Joshua, Judges, Samuel,* and *Kings* narrate the history of the Israelites from the Exodus to the Exile, and the earlier part of this history is of doubtful value. The fact is not surprising. During the Exile valuable documents were lost. Rolls wore out. Fragments of history and prophecy of different ages were gathered together into new rolls. The process of combination, of revision, and of more or less drastic "editing," which produced the Pentateuch, also affected the Historical and Prophetical books. We naturally regret that so much of the earlier history of Israel which is presented in the Bible is "ideal" history, written from the standpoint of a much later age. Yet what has been lost is relatively unimportant, because fortunately the story of the bitter struggle and ultimate triumph of the prophets is, in its main outlines, clear.

The mists of the dawn of Hebrew history almost entirely shut out Moses from our sight. These mists are still thick three hundred years later, when Elijah appears upon the scene. At that time, early in the ninth century B.C., the struggle between Canaanite superstition and Israelite religion was at its fiercest. The Baal worship of the Canaanites was supported by the prestige of Phœnician power; but Elijah won the victory. He established the principles that Jehovah alone was God in Israel, that Jehovah was righteous and demanded righteousness from His people. The narratives of Elijah and Elisha have been incorporated in the Book of Kings from a very early source. They are of Northern Israelitish origin, "and exhibit the ease, grace, and vividness which belong to the best style of Hebrew historical literature." But they are dramatic history of the type which preserves the spirit of a great adventure; and not till we come to Amos do we get teaching authenticated by the very words of the prophet himself.

In the year 760 B.C. when *Amos* flourished, the centre of Hebrew national life was not in the petty state of Judah but in the powerful Northern Kingdom. To Amos, as to many another, it was plain that this kingdom, together with all the surrounding nations, was in danger of being overwhelmed by Assyria. As he mused over the situation he saw that, if Jehovah was Creator, then every movement of history was Jehovah's work. The Assyrian would be the instrument of divine punishment on all who broke the laws of universal morality. And especially, since Israel had known Jehovah, she must seek Him if she was to live. Yet her service must not be through ritual and sacrifice. "I hate, I despise your feast days: I take no pleasure in your solemn assemblies." "Let justice flow like waters and righteousness as an unfailing stream." The prophet's message is as fresh, as much needed, now as when it was written. A religion of priests and prosperous people who condone injustice, sensuality, and harshness to the poor is worthless. They who find comfort in it "shall go into captivity with the first that go captive." Jehovah will judge according to righteousness, and especially strict will be His judgment of His own people.

> The virgin of Israel is fallen, she cannot rise again.
> She is cast down upon her land, there is none to raise her up.

Before the downfall thus predicted had come to pass, *Hosea* appeared. He was the last prophet of the Northern Kingdom, tragically isolated in a corrupt society whose ruin he foresaw.

Photo: Anderson.

From Michael Angelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican.

JEREMIAH: PERHAPS THE FINEST EXAMPLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT OF A CHARACTER DISCIPLINED AND STRENGTHENED BY SUFFERING

Photo: Anderson.

From Michael Angelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican.

EZEKIEL: THE MYSTIC AND PRIEST WHO, MORE THAN ANY OTHER MAN MADE POST-EXILIC JUDAISM

His temperament was that of a poet. He was sensitive, with a passionate religious earnestness. He insists that Jehovah loves His people with the undying love that a husband can retain for a faithless wife. God must punish, but punishment will not be the end. Love, though outraged, is always eager to forgive. Indifferent to the prophet's message, the nobles of Samaria went to their doom. In 722 B.C. the Northern Kingdom perished. Thenceforth in the small kingdom of Judah, little more than the fortress city of Jerusalem with its dependent countryside, the spirit of Hebrew monotheism was preserved.

First *Micah,* "the prophet of the poor," came forward to denounce the injustice of men in power, sternly to protest against abuses condoned by a corrupt priesthood and false prophets. Because of such evils "Zion shall be ploughed as a field and the temple-mountain shall be as the high places of the forest." And then *Isaiah* appears on the scene. The "call," which he describes with such restrained power in chapter 6 of the *Book of Isaiah,* probably took place in the year 740 B.C., while Hosea and Micah were still active. Afterwards for forty years he sought to guide his countrymen. He was alike a prophet and a statesman, idealist, reformer, and shrewd judge of political issues. The range and quality of his influence may be measured by the extent of the literature gathered under his name. Of the Book of Isaiah the last 27 chapters are a compilation of which the earliest portions are a century and a half later than the time of the Prophet. Even in the first 39 chapters there is much material not due to him. But Isaiah began a great movement which profoundly affected the national life of Judah. We may compare with it the Evangelical movement of Wesley and his friends in England in the eighteenth century. Just as their preaching gave to the English people spiritual tenacity which carried the country safely through the Napoleonic wars, so the religious confidence which Isaiah created lasted until the Jews returned from the exile. Upon the basis of Isaiah's evangelicalism developments of institutional religion were reared. But just as there would have been no Oxford Movement had the Evangelical Revival never taken place, so the Deuteronomic reform and the later Levitical Code were possible because Isaiah had taught men to hear the Divine voice asking, "Whom shall we send?" and to give the answer "Here am I, send me."

After Isaiah had passed away there came a heathen reaction under Manasseh, who ruled as a vassal of Assyria for half a century until the year 641 B.C. Fifteen years after his death *Jeremiah* received his call. His priestly ancestry, no doubt, made him more sympathetic than the earlier prophets to popular sacrificial worship. Perhaps, too, he saw that it was necessary to accept and reform such worship if the prophetic tradition was to survive. At any rate he associated himself with the Deuteronomic reform, wherein priest and prophet made an alliance discreditable to neither. Yet plainly with that reform he was not wholly content. Quite explicitly he rejects the idea that ritual is of value in itself. He was a mystic, who all around him saw signs of God's presence and power. In his writings for the first time in the Old Testament "we find frequent, intimate prayer." He taught that such communion with God removed religion from the domain of national pride. Inevitably the fierce patriots of his troubled age denounced him as a traitor. In his writings Jeremiah offers us perhaps the finest example in the Old Testament of a character disciplined and strengthened by suffering. He and his people needed all the fortitude, all the consolations of religion, which such an understanding as he had won could give them. Jerusalem fell in 586 B.C. and Jeremiah was made prisoner. When last we hear of him, he was being taken against his will by Jewish fugitives to Egypt.

The Planning and Preaching of Ezekiel

Some eleven years before the fall of Jerusalem *Ezekiel* had been carried away to Babylon; and there for a quarter of a century he dreamed and planned and preached. The Deuteronomic reform had failed: Ezekiel laid the foundations of a more stringent ecclesiastical system. Jerusalem was in ruins: Ezekiel, confident that the exiles would return, planned the theocratic state which arose to justify his vision. He, more than any other single man, made the Law, the Levitical Code which gave and still gives such marvellous coherence to the Jewish people. The enduring quality of his work testifies to his greatness. He had great literary gifts: his description of the magnificence of Tyre is a splendid piece of writing. His rich imaginative power is shown repeatedly, especially in the vision of the glory of God with which the Book of Ezekiel opens and in the picture of the resurrection in "the valley of dry bones." He quite rightly emphasises the importance of personal religion and the value of what a modern clergyman would term pastoral care. But, while Jeremiah was a mystic seeking personal communion with God, Ezekiel teaches the supremacy of Divine law. While Amos and Hosea were puritans, Ezekiel is a ritualist. And his ritual was the old Canaanite custom of animal sacrifices, strange and abhorrent to us now. It is true that he spiritualises the meaning of such rites, by developing the theology of propitiation which was afterwards to have its place in Christian doctrine. But, great as was his conception of the ordered Church transforming the world, yet the voices of those who cry in the wilderness, and recklessly find the peace of God amid strife and ruin, have done more for humanity. Ezekiel must have had rare prophetic gifts or he would not have been so distinguished a priest. Perhaps he was the greatest priest in history.

Let us pass from him to another exile by the waters of Babylon who lived a generation later, the unknown writer whom scholars call the *Second Isaiah*. In the middle of the Book of Isaiah, at the fortieth chapter, we hear his voice for the first time, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." Thereafter there comes, with lyrical splendour unmatched in religious literature, a message of consolation for Israel. The beauty of the language tends to hide from us the almost painful intensity of the writer's thought. But in no Old Testament writer do we find a more august picture of the majesty of God. To the Second Isaiah God is both Creator and Ruler of the world. Nations and their kings are the instruments of His purpose. Yet He is also patient and loving, not only to Israel but to all the nations upon earth. And Israel shall be His servant, suffering that the world may be redeemed. Nowhere else in Hebrew literature is there any parallel to this profound understanding. The Second Isaiah discovered the secret of the redemptive power of innocent suffering: more than five centuries before Calvary he revealed the significance of the Cross. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Here are combined unrivalled religious insight and matchless beauty of language; and of the writer we know nothing, save that he lived when Cyrus the Persian destroyed the Babylonian Empire.

In the Old Testament there are altogether twelve *Minor Prophets*. The work of the three earliest we have described. It is sufficient to say that in the rest we find a considerable amount of material later than the death of Alexander the Great (323 B.C.). But the *Book of Jonah* deserves special mention. It is not history but prophetic allegory. The writer, whom very uncertainly we may date about the year 300 B.C., took an old prophetic legend, and made it the vehicle of some of the finest ethical teaching in the Old Testament. The Second Isaiah had proclaimed that Israel was disciplined by suffering that she might spread to all humanity her knowledge of God. But later

From the picture in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. Reproduced by permission of the Liverpool Corporation.

"RUTH AND NAOMI." BY P. H. CALDERON

The story of Ruth is the most beautiful idyll in the Old Testament.

"TOBIT WITH THE ARCHANGEL," BY BOTTICELLI

One of many famous pictures which show the popularity of stories from the Apocrypha at the time of the Renaissance.

Judaism too often showed itself narrow and fiercely patriotic. Against national intolerance the Book of Jonah is a splendid and powerful protest. The prophet, who typifies Israel, is sent by God to preach repentance even to Nineveh, the great capital of his country's enemies. He tries to escape this unpleasant duty, but in vain. When finally he obeys the Divine command, Nineveh repents and God forgives. Jonah, sullen and angry, upbraids God for His mercy. And God answers, "Should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand little children and also much cattle?" Both those who profess literal belief in the miracle of Jonah's whale and those who deride their credulity usually ignore the lesson of this beautiful allegory. Modern nations at war, like fanatical Jews of old, resent such teaching. But the Book of Jonah has well been called the Holy of Holies of the Old Testament.

§ 5

THE WRITINGS

The National Literature of the Jews

The third division of the Hebrew Old Testament consists, as we have seen, of eleven or, according to our reckoning, thirteen books. Though they may contain some early material they were for the most part written late in Jewish history, probably within the two centuries which ended with the year 140 B.C. At that date the Jews, under the Maccabean princes, had just regained their independence. We can imagine the thrill of exultation which then went through the people. They were once again a free nation. They awoke to the fact that, outside the Law and the Prophets, they had a national literature, a valuable record of national tenacity during the era of subjection. There was an irresistible impulse to gather together the finest works in this literature, to make a collection of poetry, drama, philosophy, and late history which should supplement the earlier Scriptures. So

"The Writings" were gradually collected and gradually regarded as inspired. Such scanty evidence as we possess points to the fact that about a century before the birth of Christ this process was virtually completed. But even in Christ's day Jewish teachers did not regard "The Writings" as on a level with the Law and the Prophets. In particular the sacred character of four books, the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Esther, and Chronicles, was long disputed. But at a conference at Jamnia, about A.D. 100, Jewish rabbis appear to have reached agreement. Thenceforth, as scholars say, the canon of the Hebrew Old Testament was closed. The leaders of the Jewish Church ratified a popular verdict; but the strange arguments by which some justified their action may be taken to show the hesitation which they felt. From three of the four disputed books there is no quotation in the New Testament. To Chronicles alone is there a reference; and this reference shows that it was regarded, when Jesus taught, as the last of the books deemed inspired.

By far the greatest of all the works in "The Writings" is the *Book of Psalms.* Sometimes, indeed, it gives its name to the whole collection. It is a hymn-book, the finest hymn-book ever made. Some of the hymns in it are ancient; a few may even go back to the time of David. But most were written after the Exile and some probably belong to Maccabean times. The hymn-book was compiled for use at the Temple in Jerusalem. Naturally, however, it passed into use at the synagogue services and thus had a profound influence on the faith of the Jewish people in the time of Christ. Anyone who examines the teaching of Jesus, as it is recorded in St. Mark, the earliest of the Gospels, will notice how frequently He quotes the Psalms. Christians in all ages have shared His love of these glorious hymns. Some few are vindictive and so alien from His temper. A few others we may deem prosaic. But the large majority are extraordinarily beautiful, alike in thought and expression. They are pure poetry, whereas too many modern hymns merely deserve to be described as religious verse. Especially splendid are the Pilgrim Songs (Psalms 120–134) which were sung by Jews coming to the Great Feasts as they ascended Mount Zion. We do not get in the Psalms, and we should hardly expect to find, any advance on the religious teaching of the great prophets. There is, for example, in the Psalter no doctrine of Eternal Life. The idea that prosperity is the reward of righteousness is common. The theology of this great hymn-book is, in fact, conventional. But faith and hope abound. Religious joy and spiritual confidence, trust in God and thankfulness for His mercies, find repeated expression in language which is a pure delight. No religious poetry that has yet been written can be ranked above these Jewish hymns.

Among "The Writings" there are two other poetical works. *Lamentations* consists of five dirges, highly artificial in structure. Possibly the second and fourth were written by some man who had actually seen the horrors of the capture of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., while the remainder are of later date. Even in the English version we seem to find studied elaboration rather than passion evoked by overwhelming tragedy; and few will contradict the verdict that the book is not supremely great either in its religious insight or as a work of art. The *Song of Songs,* as we have already seen, was classed as Scripture only after much hesitation. Its right to a place in the Bible was defended on the ground that Solomon was its author, and that, symbolically, it represented Jehovah's love for his people. Neither contention can be justified. Its language shows that, in its present form, it cannot be earlier than the third century B.C. It does not mention Jehovah; it is in no sense a religious work. Some believe it to be a disordered dramatic idyll; but more probably, it is a collection of unconnected love-lyrics such as were sung at Jewish wedding-feasts. Their beauty, their sensuous passion, is undeniable. We do not wonder that Goethe praised them highly. They are voluptuous without being coarse. There is in them, moreover, a sensitive delight in nature which is rare in Hebrew literature. It is good that the Song of Songs should be in the Bible if only to remind us that, to the men who made the Old Testament as to ourselves, human love and springtime were two of God's rich gifts.

From poetry we pass naturally to idyllic narrative and drama. Of each of these forms of art we have one example in "The Writings." The *Book of Ruth* is exquisite in its simplicity and grace: Goethe described it as the loveliest little idyll that tradition has handed down to us. The story moves forward easily and naturally; it is filled with the spirit of kindliness. When it was written we cannot tell: some good scholars believe it to be a very early example of Hebrew literary art. Early or late, it deserves to be immortal. Contrast with the fierce nationalism of Esther the words of Ruth the Moabitess to the Israelite widow: "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." With such affection the daughter of Moab came to Bethlehem. Half the world now turns with like love to that Judæan village.

A Great Drama

The *Book of Job* is a great drama, of which the theme is the problem of human suffering. It presents many conundrums to commentators, among whom there is much disagreement. But apparently an early popular story was used as a basis of the drama; and, after the first draft was completed, large additions and alterations were made by other writers. Consequently it is unequal, alike in descriptive power and in cogency of thought. The book mirrors the perplexity of Jewish thinkers during the period of Greek domination. It belongs to what is called the Wisdom-Literature of the Jews. Roughly speaking, this literature is Jewish speculative philosophy: in it an attempt is made to understand God's nature by an intellectual inquiry into the problems of human life. In Job no satisfactory reason is given for the suffering of the righteous. When the Lord answers out of the whirlwind He merely bids Job consider the inexplicable

CHRIST, AS IMAGINED BY LEONARDO DA VINCI

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"CHRIST WASHING PETER'S FEET," BY FORD MADOX BROWN

The Fourth Gospel records, not the Last Supper, but the Washing of the Feet by which Christ consecrated human service.

majesty of His creative power, manifest everywhere. St. Paul was doubtless recalling this reverent agnosticism when he wrote, "How unsearchable are God's judgments, and His ways past finding out."

Though the agnosticism of the Book of Job is profoundly reverent, there are in the Old Testament two other wisdom-books where faith has plainly degenerated. In *Proverbs* a shrewd worldly morality is mixed with finer material; in the greater part of *Ecclesiastes* sceptical pessimism is dominant. Neither book in its present form can be much earlier than the year 250 B.C. The *Book of Proverbs* undoubtedly is highly composite in character. It contains three main divisions, of which the finest and latest is to be found in the first nine chapters of the book. The climax of this "Praise of Wisdom" magnificently describes Wisdom as with God from the beginning. "When He prepared the heavens I was there. When He appointed the foundations of the earth I was by Him."

We feel no surprise that *Ecclesiastes* was only admitted to the Old Testament after prolonged hesitation. Its triumph bears witness to the wide liberality of later Jewish thought. We can best understand its apparent inconsistencies if we think of it as a record of the free discussion of academic theologians. It is often terribly gloomy, but the last chapter is superb in its English dress. "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it"—the pure music of such sentences is perfect.

There remain for our consideration four works, Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, Daniel, and Esther. *Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah* really form a single continuous narrative, and it is generally assumed that all were produced by the same compiler. He probably lived during the third century B.C. A comparison with the Books of Kings, which he used as one of the main sources of his work, shows that as a historian he is untrustworthy. For this reason, probably, the Book of Chronicles with difficulty secured a place among "The Writings." Ezra and Nehemiah were accepted more readily as there was no book in the historical section of "The Prophets" which dealt with the same period of history. Yet it is certain that, as historical records of the return from the Exile, these works, though interesting, are faulty. Speaking briefly, Chronicles is Kings rewritten by a strict Jewish Churchman: it is history falsified that it may be made edifying. In the supposed interests of piety truth has been sacrificed. Other ages can offer worse examples of ecclesiastical historians who were convinced that truth could be usefully perverted for the greater glory of God.

The *Book of Daniel* was written within the period 165–163 B.C. to encourage the Jews during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. The success of the Maccabean revolt, to which it doubtless gave powerful aid, won for it widespread popularity. Though it is probably the latest book in the Old Testament it was speedily included among "The Writings"; and in the time of Christ it was as well known as is *Pilgrim's Progress* to ourselves. It is the only example in the Old Testament of what is called Apocalyptic literature. In the New Testament the Book of Revelation is a work of the same type; and a number of other similar works are known to scholars. In all of them we find veiled predictions, usually relating to the outcome of events in the writer's own time, combined with fantastic and sometimes magnificent imagery. Often these works, by a literary fiction which deceived nobody, were assigned to some worthy of the past, a Daniel, a Moses, an Enoch. The writers of them sought to give a religious interpretation of history and to express their faith in the ultimate triumph of righteousness. Only by a violent effort of the imagination can we understand them aright, for they belong to a form of art and to modes of thought which have passed away. The Book of Daniel is a great work, for its stories still inspire and its grandeur still attracts men, though too often they profoundly misconceive its character.

The *Book of Esther* is an elaborate and skilfully written story which appealed to Jewish national pride. It is useful to have it in the Old Testament if only to indicate the sort of narrative which was popular in the time of Christ. It is alien from His spirit; and all Christians will sympathise with the reluctance of the Rabbis to class it among their sacred books.

§ 6

THE APOCRYPHA

In some English Bibles, placed between the Old and New Testaments, there are fourteen books or fragments of books, which bear the title "Apocrypha." Roughly speaking, these books were accepted by Jews of Alexandria as part of the Bible, but rejected by Jews of Palestine. All but three of them are regarded as "inspired" by the Roman Church. The Reformed Churches give them a less honourable place. In the Church of England passages from the Apocrypha are read "for example of life and instruction of manners"; they are not to be applied "to establish any doctrine."

Some of these books and fragments are not worthy of a place in the Bible. The stories of *Susanna* and of *Bel and the Dragon* are poor stuff. *Judith* is a horrible tale in which a woman treacherously uses her beauty to murder the general of an invading army. The *Second Book of Maccabees* is history decked with fantastic legends. The *First Book of Esdras* is of even less historical value than Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. The best-known passage in it is the story of the three guardsmen who disputed as to what was the strongest thing in the world. "The first wrote, Wine is the strongest. The second wrote, The King is the strongest. The third wrote, Women are the strongest; but, above all things, Truth beareth away the victory." At the end "all the people shouted and said, Great is Truth, and mighty above all things." The verdict has passed into popular speech in its Latin dress, *Magna est veritas et prævalet.* The *Book of Tobit* is a romance which in the later Middle Ages was very popular; but, though it contains some fine moral lessons, it has more than a faint flavour of the *Arabian Nights.*

Yet in the Apocrypha there are also works of real value. The *First Book of Maccabees* is first-rate history of the successful revolt of the Jews after their persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes. It was written about 100 B.C., when little more than half a century had passed since the events which it records. As we study this history we realise the anguish and determination which caused the Book of Daniel to be written; and we understand why that apocalypse continued to be widely and deservedly popular in the time of Christ.

The most important and most attractive work in the Apocrypha is that called *Ecclesiasticus.* Its proper title is *The Wisdom of Jesus-ben-Sirach.* It consists of shrewd reflections upon life, and gives a sort of religious philosophy of conduct of singular beauty and penetration. In some former Christian ages it was widely read and highly esteemed: its title, which is at least as early as the third century, shows that it was regarded as in an especial degree *the* Church Book. Its author Jesus (or Joshua), the son or grandson of Sirach, was a Jew of Palestine who wrote about the year 180 B.C., some fifteen years before the Book of Daniel was written. The grandson of this Jesus revised the work and translated it into Greek when he was living in Egypt.

The Wisdom-Literature of the Jews

The more Ecclesiasticus is studied, the more it is loved. It ranks with the Book of Job as one of the two finest examples of the Wisdom-literature of the Jews. To the author "the fountain of wisdom is the word of God most high." "There is One wise and greatly to be feared, the Lord sitting upon His throne."

From a painting by Antonio Ciseri.

THE CONDEMNATION OF JESUS

Pilate answered and said, "What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?" And they cried out again, "Crucify him."
(Mark xv., 12,13.)

"All wisdom cometh from the Lord and is with Him for ever." In this spirit of austere piety Jesus-ben-Sirach surveys the life of man. He has studied books and human nature with equal zest and insight. He is free from illusions, but his freedom has not hardened into cynicism. His reflections are not always original: could any man produce an original summary of proverbial philosophy? Yet as a phrase-maker he is great. "A fool travaileth with a word, as a woman in labour with a child," is most happily turned; and more than phrase-making has gone to the sentence, "There is a sinner that hath good success in evil things; and there is a gain that turneth to loss."

One of the most attractive things about Ben-Sirach is his strong, yet truly religious, common-sense. Of worship without righteousness he is as scornful as the great prophets of His race. "The sacrifice of a just man is acceptable," he says significantly. He is contemptuous of the superstitions which seem to be always with us. "Divinations and soothsayings and dreams are vain: and the heart fancieth as a woman's heart in travail." With regard to the respective values of prayer and a physician's skill in sickness, he keeps the balance true. "My son, in thy sickness be not negligent; but pray unto the Lord, and He will make thee whole. Leave off from sin, and cleanse thy heart from all wickedness. Then give place to the physician, for the Lord hath created him: let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him. There is a time when in their hands there is good success." Such sane teaching has lost none of its value by the lapse of time.

The Dignified Beauty of Ecclesiasticus

The best known of all the passages in Ecclesiasticus is, of course, that which begins, "Let us now praise famous men." Its use in England, whenever school or college benefactors are commemorated, has become general; and, however often we may hear the passage read, the appeal of its dignified beauty does not fail. "Their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth for evermore," is magnificent in its simplicity; and for sublime pathos there are few sentences in the English language which can equal the apparently unstudied words, "and some there be, which have no memorial; who are perished as though they had never been."

There is a second wisdom-book in the Apocrypha which bears the title *The Wisdom of Solomon.* Its author was a Palestinian Jew who was quite possibly a contemporary of St. Paul. He was, even more than the Apostle, under the influence of Greek religious ideas of his age. Christians at a first reading are tempted to class his work above Ecclesiasticus. They are inevitably attracted by its doctrine of the all-pervading presence and power of the Spirit of God. "Thy counsel who hath known except Thou give wisdom, and send Thy Holy Spirit from above," is a sentence which might have come from the New Testament. Christians feel also that the book contains their own doctrine of Eternal Life. "For God created man to be immortal and made him to be the image of His own eternity"—such is a belief which will last as long as Christianity endures. Yet the book is not quite first-rate. Perhaps the writer was ambitious to make it supremely beautiful and for that reason failed to produce such unstudied perfection as we find, for instance, in St. Paul's great Eulogy of Love. But at times we forget to be critical. "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction: but they are in peace." The man who could write these words of faith and hope had a true message for humanity.

There is only one other work in the Apocrypha which in our brief survey merits description. It is the *Second Book of Esdras,* which was written by a Jew after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Some Christian writer revised the work and added a preface; and the book thus edited was probably published soon after the year A.D. 120. Many Jews thought that the destruction of Jerusalem

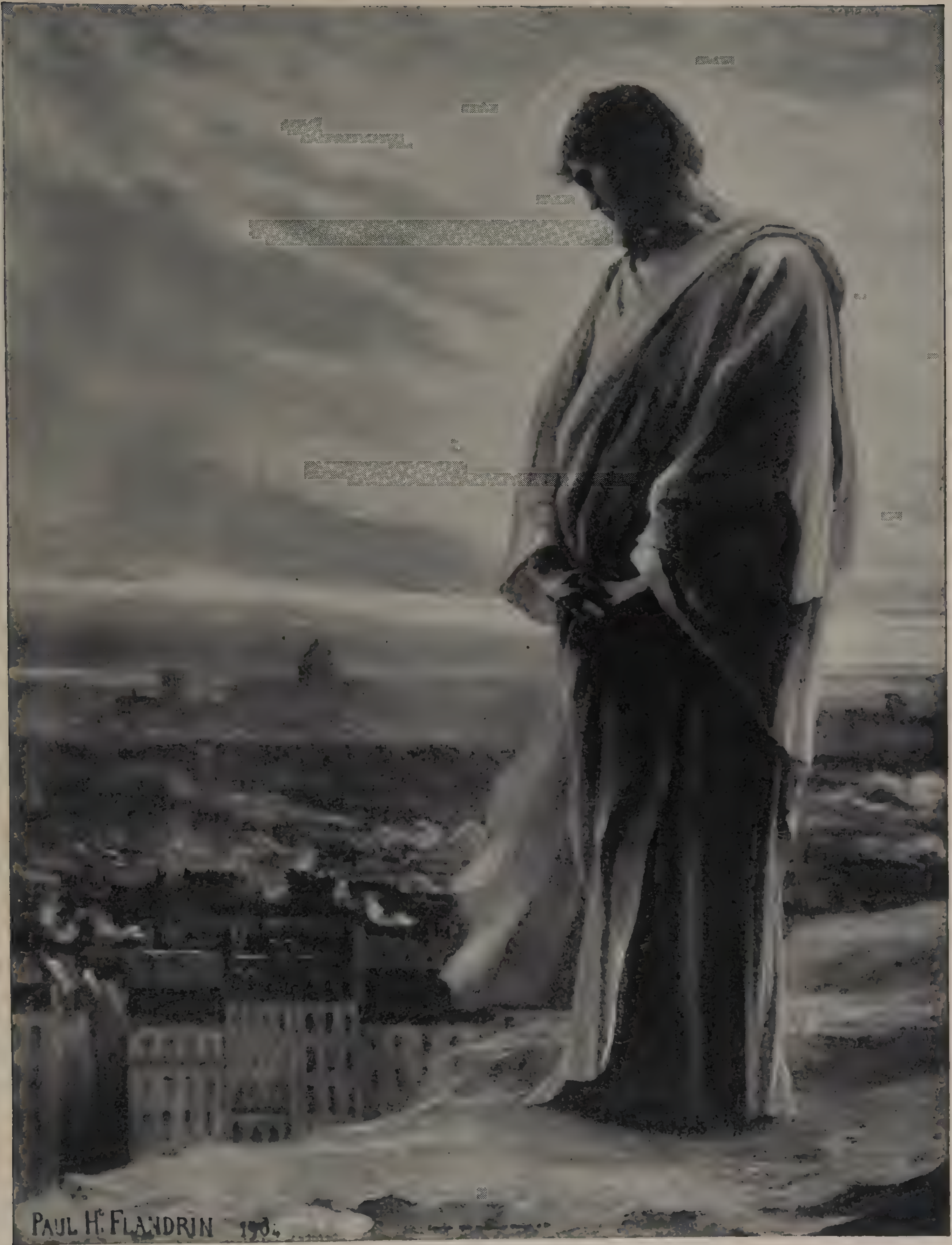
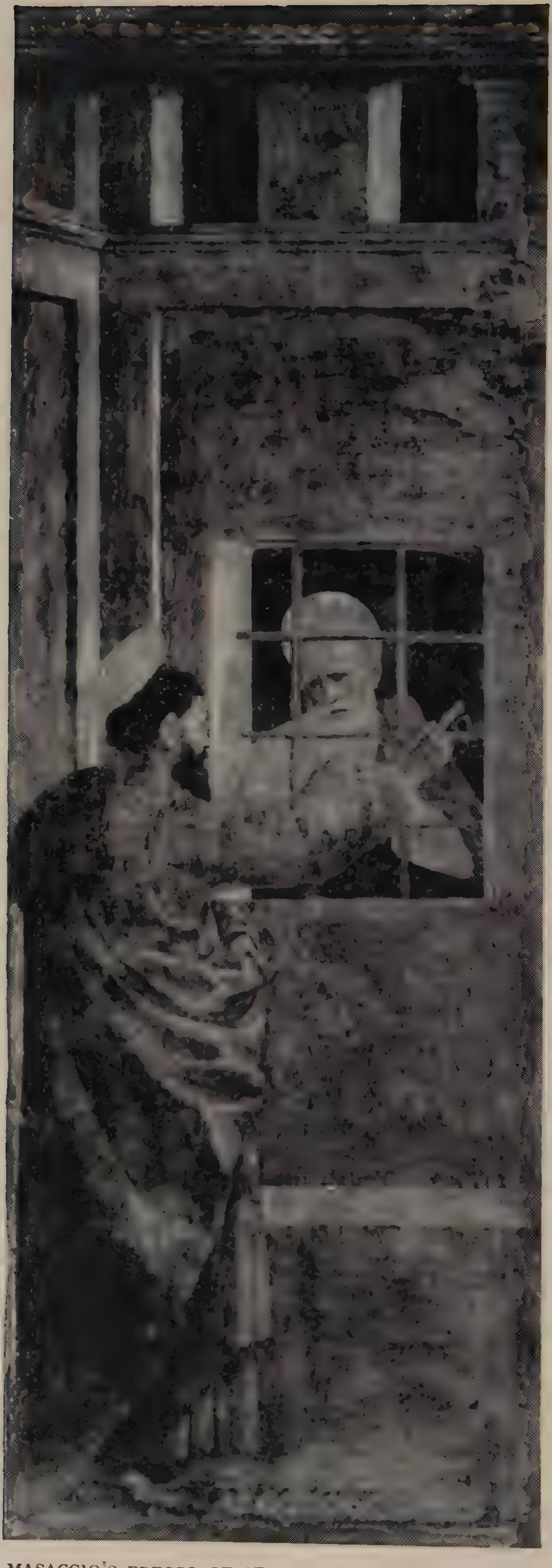


Photo: Braun, Clemént & Co.

"JESUS MOURNS OVER THE CITY," BY PAUL H. FLANDRIN

". . . thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"



MASACCIO'S FRESCO OF ST PETER VISITED IN PRISON BY ST. PAUL and of the Temple would begin the End of the Age: the calamity would prepare the way for a Messianic Kingdom of God. The influence of such ideas can be seen in the Gospels and even more explicitly in the Book of Revelation; and it is because the Second Book of Esdras has so many parallels to New Testament writings that scholars have studied it minutely. The book, in fact, helps us to understand what was the religious background of the early Christian missionaries. When the author wrote, the breach between Judaism and Christianity had not become complete. In the book there is the "larger, broader, more genial spirit of Judaism," which passed away with the triumph of Jewish legalism a generation later. Whenever Christianity has been true to the temper of its Founder, it has preserved this spirit. Because of its presence, early leaders like St. Paul and St. John freed their faith from Jewish fetters; and, by using the language and ideas of the Greek world, commended the Gospel to the Gentiles.

The Second Book of Esdras is but one among many works which have precariously survived to show the religious influences which fashioned the growth of Christianity. This literature links the Old Testament to the New. Study of it is a fascinating branch of research; but it merely confirms the fact that Christianity would never have come into existence had not men felt that Jesus, by His life and teaching, in a manner unparalleled, revealed God to the world.

§ 7

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The books of the New Testament were written in Greek and all the writers, except possibly St. Luke, were Jews. But their Greek was not the language of Homer, or even of Thucydides or Plato; it was Hellenistic Greek, the popular language in which, in the first century of our era, men spoke to their friends and wrote to their wives. The literary Greek of that period was artificial, "fine writing," which tried to copy classical models of style. New Testament Greek seemed a thing apart, until quite recently family and business letters of the same age were discovered in the sand of Egypt. Then its true nature was revealed.

The New Testament writers wisely used this popular language, for they sought to spread Christianity not merely among a cultured minority, but as widely as possible. For the most part their converts came from what we should now call the lower-middle classes. To this grade of society most of Christ's intimate disciples belonged. Some, like the sons of Zebedee, were probably well-to-do; but all of them were above the status of the slave. The early missionaries welcomed men and women of all classes. Though they used popular Greek, we must not think of them as ill-educated. St. Paul, who received a thorough theological training, seems to have been the son of a man of good position in his native city. Both St. Luke and St. John the Evangelist were men of ability and culture; and all the other New Testament writers were able to express themselves in Greek, though it was probably in no case their native tongue.

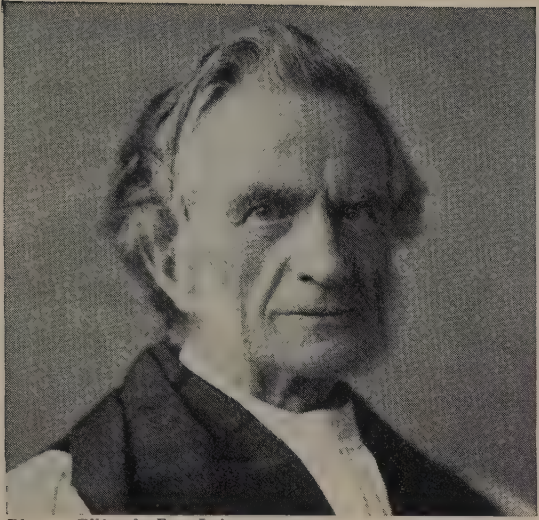
The Writers of the New Testament

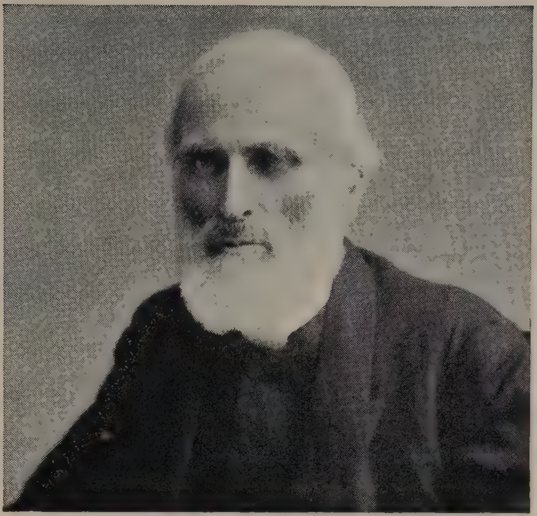
Though the New Testament writers used a non-literary language they often reached, as our Authorised Version shows, a splendid dignity. Convinced that they had a great message, they wrote naturally and directly. St. Mark's Greek is rough; but with great brevity he gives us a singularly vigorous and effective memoir. St. Paul dictated his letters to a secretary. We have in them unfinished sentences, involved arguments, rapid changes of thought. As we read them, Paul the preacher rises before us. As we study them, we are amazed by the fertility of his mind, its subtlety and flexibility, its creative power; and at times he reaches levels of eloquence unsurpassed in literature. A modern scholar describes St. John's writing as "correct enough in grammar, but simple to baldness and with no sense of idiom." Yet, though he struggles in this way with a language not his own, he has produced in the Fourth Gospel and in his First Epistle two masterpieces of religious literature. Words recur; simple detached sentences follow one another: there is no ornament; all seems "thin and abstract." We should expect complete failure; we get the purest spiritual beauty. The mystic and philosopher speaks, as it were, a child's language; yet none other has enriched so greatly man's spiritual understanding. St. Luke is the most brilliant writer in the New Testament. His ease and grace of style, his wide sympathies, his sensitiveness, make him peculiarly attractive to modern readers. His descriptive power, as we see in his account of St. Paul's shipwreck, is remarkable; and anyone who doubts his literary skill should try to rewrite the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Yet, of course, that parable came from Jesus, perhaps with little change; and the literary quality of His teaching we cannot ignore.

Jesus of Nazareth

Even in a literary discussion of the New Testament it is quite impossible to ignore Jesus of Nazareth. His personality dominates the whole collection of books and gives it its inherent unity. His teaching as to God and Man, His death, the perfection of His character, His significance for humanity—with such matters the New Testament writers are almost exclusively concerned. When we reflect that, for the most part, these writers had not known Jesus personally, that their witness is at second-hand, we realise how firm and deep must have been the impress which Christ made on those who were with him during His brief mission. There is, in the main outlines of the picture which we have of Him, no blurring. We know His thought, His temper, His character—in a word, His quality—as we know that of few men in history.

Probably the records of His teaching given in the Gospels are more exact than we should expect. It is true that at least thirty years passed after His death before any of the Gospels were written. But the Jews cultivated a verbal memory, whereas we trust to written records; so it may well be that even after half a century accurate fragments of his teaching were preserved. Probably Jesus was born in 6 B.C. and crucified in A.D. 29. He normally used the Aramaic dialect of Palestine; but He knew Hebrew, and probably could speak Greek. A century before His birth the population of Galilee was largely non-Jewish: it was "Galilee of the Gentiles"; and, in Christ's lifetime, Capernaum and the adjacent towns were as much Græco-Syrian as Jewish. Near Nazareth, a town of possibly some 10,000 people, ran great high-roads connecting some of the chief cities of the Levant. Thus, though Jesus came from a carpenter's cottage, His youth was not entirely remote from the great world. Yet, of course, above all He was Himself. As Professor Peake says, "no figure in history is more marked by perfect poise and mental balance, none more utterly sincere, more searching in His moral judgments, more relentless in His exposure of unreality." The quality of His teaching is shown most vividly in the great parables and in that collection of His sayings which we call the Sermon on the Mount. The sayings bear the unmistakable stamp of absolute religious genius. In them the finest moral idealism is enforced by epigrams and paradox. The commands are direct, unhesitating, and sincere. A shrewd simplicity goes hand in hand with a noble century. To the speaker Heaven is as real as earth. He lives with God more than with men. He has a sure insight into the human heart and an equally sure understanding of the nature and purpose of God. He never hesitates, is never at a loss. His mind is amazingly fertile, quick to unify apparent contradictions. He has, if we may use the metaphor, the creative genius of a great moral and religious artist. In Him is the austere dignity which great wisdom gives. His calm authority inspires awe and respect. For the rest we will only say that He has been revered and loved as no other man in human history. So





Photos: Elliott & Fry, Ltd.

BISHOP WESTCOTT

PROFESSOR HORT

The two great English scholars of the last generation to whom the standard Greek Text of the New Testament is due.

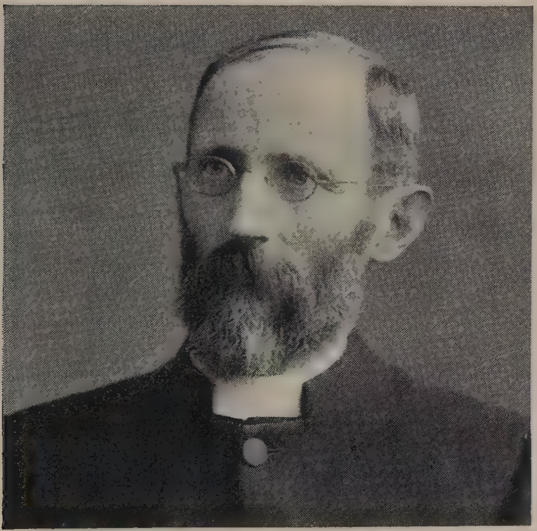


Photo: J. Russell & Sons.

R. H. CHARLES, ARCHDEACON OF WESTMINSTER

The greatest living authority on Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic literature.

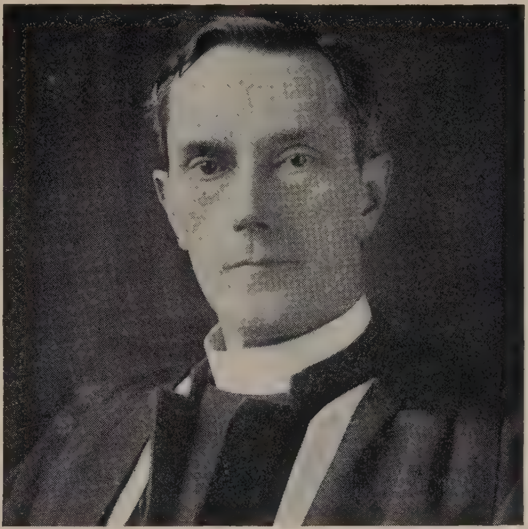


Photo: Russell, London.

W. R. INGE, DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S

Scholar, Philosopher, and Theologian.

it has come to pass that the four Gospels have been printed more frequently and read more often, more intently, and more affectionately, than any books ever written.

The Four Gospels

The earliest of them is the *Gospel according to St. Mark,* which was apparently written about the time of the fall of Jerusalem, 70 A.D., though it may be some ten years older. It probably was founded on "the rough popular preaching" of St. Peter and the earliest missionaries. Its author was John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas and at intervals the companion of St. Paul. When the men who had known Jesus were passing away, St. Mark wrote down the honest, effective, oft-told story which had been their "good-news," their Gospel. He included also an account of the last days of John the Baptist, which he probably got from some follower of that prophet; and inserted the Little Apocalypse (chapter 13) in which some Christian Jew had mingled Christ's prediction of the doom of Jerusalem with his own vision of the End of the Age.

The *Gospel according to St. Luke* and the *Acts of the Apostles* are due to a single author, who in the latter half of the Acts has incorporated sections of a diary kept by one who travelled with St. Paul when he was taken as a prisoner to Rome. That the diarist was St. Luke and that he wrote both the Gospel which bears his name and the Acts is very probable. It may be that the Acts contains no account of St. Paul's martyrdom because it was written before that event; in that case the Gospel must be dated about A.D. 60. On the other hand many scholars believe that it was written a generation later; and some assume that an unknown editor used St. Luke's diary. It has now been established, by ingenious and quite conclusive arguments, that both St. Luke and the author of *"the Gospel according to St. Matthew,"* used Mark together with another early document, now lost. This document scholars call Q. It was a supremely important record of the teaching of Christ, which the Apostle Matthew had written. A large piece of it was incorporated wholesale in our first Gospel as the Sermon on the Mount. Because of this fact, the first Gospel bears the name of St. Matthew; but it was really written by an unknown Jewish Christian of Palestine about the year A.D. 80. He used, besides Mark and Q, a collection of proof-texts to show that Christ was the fulfilment of Jewish prophecy. This way of using the Old Testament was in accord with allegorical methods of interpretation common among Jewish Rabbis of the time: we do not deem it satisfactory. In "Matthew" we also find that Church practices, which had grown up during the half-century since Christ's death, were believed to have His authority. The book is well suited for reading at public worship; and was placed first among the Gospels because it was for long most highly esteemed. The modern world values Mark more highly because it is more primitive. Yet at one time Mark was in danger of being lost, like Q. The end of it has perished. As Professor Burkitt says, all our manuscripts are derived from a single tattered copy. St. Luke, far more than the author of the first Gospel, was a historian in the modern sense. Besides Mark and Q, he managed to reach highly valuable sources of information. From these came incidents that women were especially likely to have remembered: from them also came the great parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, which he alone has preserved.

The *Fourth Gospel* still remains an enigma: its authorship and its historical value are fiercely disputed. It is not a biography so much as a spiritual interpretation of the life of Christ. It stands in somewhat the same relation to the other Gospels as does Plato's *Apology* to a life of Socrates. Without doubt, the author also wrote the three Epistles of St. John: without doubt he preserved accurate traditions of the career of Jesus which are independent of, and sometimes correct, the other Gospels. But his theology is a development of that of St. Paul; he is "St. Paul's best commentator." Probably St. John, the beloved disciple, the son of Zebedee, in the beginning made his own intimate knowledge of Christ the basis of addresses and meditations. The memory of these was preserved by a group of followers, who were also influenced by St. Paul's teaching and by current Greek philosophy. And finally some man of genius among the group produced within the period A.D. 100–115 the Gospel which bears St. John's name. Whatever its origin, it is, as Clement of Alexandria called it towards the end of the second century, the "spiritual" Gospel. The writer clearly stated his purpose in composing it in the words with which the book ended, before the final chapter was added as an appendix. It was "written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

St. Paul

In the New Testament there are probably ten genuine *Epistles of St. Paul.* The first to be written, the two letters to the *Thessalonians,* must be dated about A.D. 50: they are probably the earliest works in the New Testament. At intervals of a year or two between each, there followed the Epistles to the *Corinthians, Romans,* and *Galatians.* The remaining letters to the *Colossians, Philemon,* the *Ephesians,* and *Philippians* were probably written about A.D. 60. It is, however, just possible that Ephesians is not a genuine Epistle of St. Paul: its vocabulary differs somewhat from that of the undoubted letters. St. Paul was probably born about the same time as Christ, converted a few years after the Crucifixion, and executed during Nero's persecution of the Christians in A.D. 64. His Epistles thus cover little more than the last ten years of his life. They are true letters, and not theological treatises in disguise. There is in them little systematic unity, and they show a surprisingly rapid development of thought. The later Epistles contain many echoes of the pagan mystery-religions. In the "mysteries," Professor Gilbert

Murray says, men sought "for some magic of redemption in which purification and passionate penitence should count for more than a mere upright life." To this end men were initiated into mystical brotherhoods, which had sacraments and fasts: they believed that thereby they could obtain communion with some deity and immortality through salvation. It was natural that converts to Christianity from these forms of faith should retain many of their old ideas. What surprises us is that St. Paul, with his Jewish background, should have been so willing to use the language of these alien cults. With their magics he had no sympathy: he remained a Jew for whom faith issuing in righteousness was all-important. But, as Dr. Inge says, though he "was ready to fight to the death against the Judaising of Christianity, he was willing to take the first step, and a long one, towards the Paganising of it."

The debt which Christianity owes to St. Paul is so vast that we need not try to measure it. There is indeed a danger that he, and not Jesus, may be thought of as the virtual founder of the Christian faith. Against such exaggeration we ought to guard ourselves. In a sense the Apostle created Christian theology; but, in so doing, he only gave form to Messianic claims which Christ made for Himself. The body is St. Paul's: his Master gave the spirit and the life.

The Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus* which bear the name of St. Paul are almost certainly "much-edited fragments" of genuine letters of the Apostle. They lay emphasis on details of Church organisation which, by natural development, became important a generation after St. Paul's career ended. Their language is unlike his: and above all we miss the ringing note of his evangelical faith. If we assume that they took their present shape about A.D. 100, we shall not go far wrong.

The *Epistle to the Hebrews* bears in its title St. Paul's name: but from quite early times men of insight saw that he could not have been its author. It was written about the year

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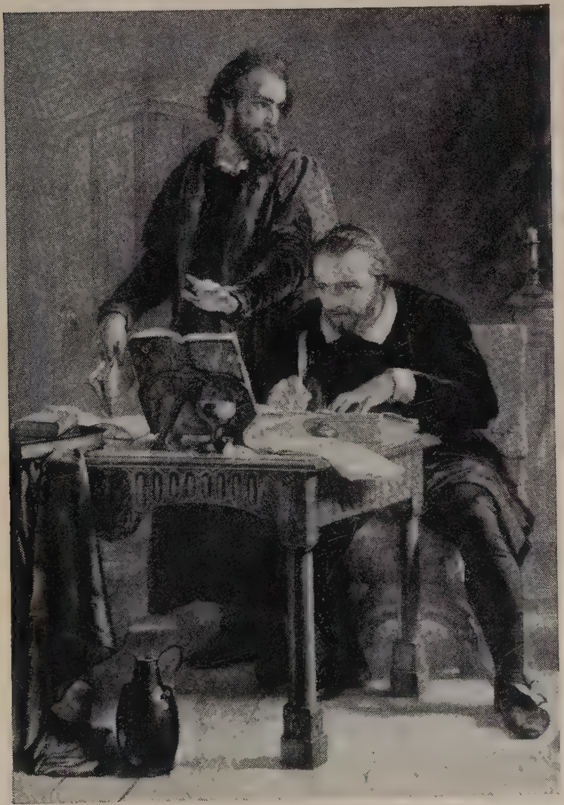
ERASMUS

The great Renaissance scholar who produced the first printed Greek Testament



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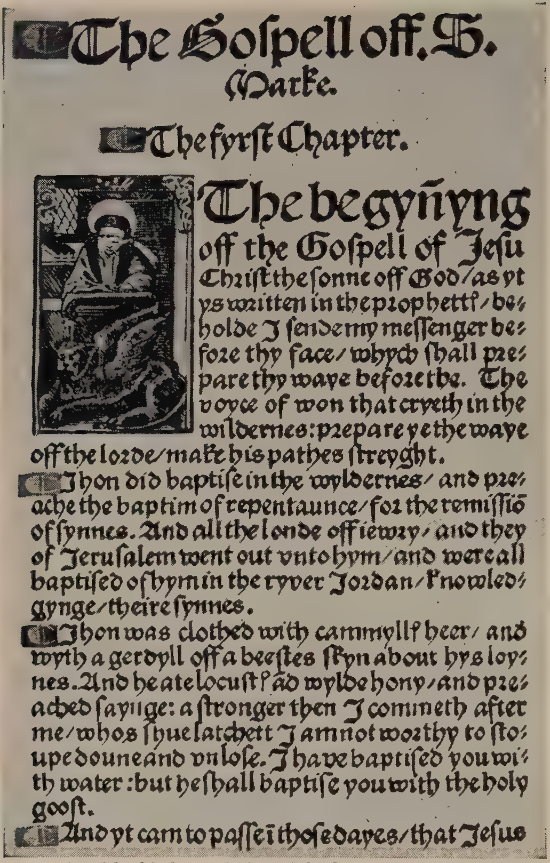
TINDALE TRANSLATING THE BIBLE

"He furnished to all later translators a wonderful pattern of simple and dignified English."



¶ The Goſpell off. S. Marke.

¶ The fyrſt Chapter.

The begyñyng off the Goſpell of Ieſu Chꝛiſt the ſonne off God/as yt ys wꝛitten in the pꝛophettꝭ/ beholde I ſende my meſſenger befoꝛe thy face/ whych ſhall prepare thy waye befoꝛe the. The voyce of won that cryeth in the wildernes: pꝛepare ye the waye off the loꝛde/ make his pathes ſtreyght.

¶ Ihon did baptiſe in the wyldernes/ and preache the baptim of repentaunce/ foꝛ the remiſſiō of ſynnes. And all the londe off iewry/ and they of Ieruſalem went out vnto hym/ and were all baptiſed of hym in the ryver Ioꝛdan/ knowledgynge/ theire ſynnes.

¶ Ihon was clothed with cammyllꝭ heer/ and wyth a gerdyll off a beeſtes ſkyn about hys loynes. And he ate locuſtꝭ ād wylde hony/ and preached ſaynge: a ſtronger then I commeth after me/ whos ſhue latchett I am not woꝛthy to ſtoupe doune and vnloſe. I have baptiſed you with water: but he ſhall baptiſe you with the holy gooſt.

¶ And yt cam to paſſe ī thoſe dayes/ that Ieſus

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TINDALE'S NEW TESTAMENT, THE FIRST PRINTED TRANSLATION IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The specimen page reproduced shows the actual type area.

A.D. 80, possibly for Jews in Rome, where it was known before the end of the first century. It is the most elaborate literary work in the New Testament, a short treatise rather than a letter. Because of its polished precision we still find it fairly easy to read, though its Jewish background of High Priest and sacrifice and its allegorical use of Scripture are foreign to our thought. There are in it some finely eloquent passages.

The *First Epistle of Peter* and the Epistles of *James* and *Jude* are all short works, and there is no agreement among scholars as to their authorship and date. "James" is the most Jewish book in the New Testament: its note of kindly authority and its atmosphere of simple goodness make it singularly attractive. If it was written by "the brother of the Lord," it must be one of the earliest Christian writings which have survived. The First Epistle of Peter has originality and a certain distinction: it is interesting in that it stands, as it were, midway between St. Paul's Hellenism and the Judaic Christianity of St. James. "Jude" is mainly remarkable because the writer refers to late Jewish legends preserved in works called *The Book of Enoch* and *The Assumption of Moses*. The so-called Second *Epistle of Peter* is the latest book in the Bible. It was written between the years A.D. 130–150, and has little historical and no literary value.

The *Revelation of St. John the Divine* is a book of remarkable grandeur and power. It is the work of a Jew who, though he wrote in Greek, thought in Hebrew and constantly used Hebrew idioms. Its style proves conclusively that its author was not the St. John of the Fourth Gospel. The greater part of it is poetry rather than prose: and the poetry has rare beauty and sublime simplicity.

Dr. Charles gives, as an example of its character:

> And I saw a new heaven and a new earth;
> For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away;

> And there was no more sea.
> And the holy city, New Jerusalem, I saw
> Coming down out of heaven from God,
> Made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

The seer, whose visions are so rich in imagery and spiritual insight, was apparently a Christian from Galilee who migrated to Ephesus and completed his book during the persecution of Domitian about the year A.D. 95. Like the writer of the book of Daniel, he used the later Jewish form of prophecy which we term Apocalyptic. His object was to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God upon earth, and to assure the persecuted Christians of the final triumph of goodness. That triumph will be realised when "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ." The faithful are to follow wherever the Lamb that was slain may lead: for them, whether they live or die, there can be no defeat. With such splendid optimism the Bible ends.

§ 8

TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

After the time of Ezra (450 B.C.) Hebrew gradually ceased to be a living language. When Jesus taught, though Hebrew was still used in worship, the Jews of Palestine spoke a dialect called Aramaic. The great international language at that time was Greek. In fact, after Alexander the Great (330 B.C.) conquered the Persian Empire, Greek speedily became the common speech of the Jews who spread over the Eastern Mediterranean in pursuit of trade. In Alexandria there was, from its foundation, a large Jewish colony; and for their needs a translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek was begun about the year 240 B.C. It was probably finished within the next two centuries; and is known as the *Septuagint.* It contained a number of works, now in our Apocrypha, which were not in the Hebrew

Old Testament. This Greek version is especially important because New Testament writers very frequently quote it when they refer to passages in the earlier part of the Bible. The New Testament itself was originally written in Greek; and until about the year A.D. 200 the Christian Church normally used Greek Scriptures. About that time these Greek Scriptures were translated into Latin. Some two centuries later the great scholar Jerome made a more accurate Latin translation of the whole Bible. For this purpose he used, not the Septuagint, but the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. He thus produced the *Vulgate,* which to this day remains the standard Latin translation of the complete Bible.

The first complete English version of the Old and New Testaments resulted from Wycliffe's attempt to evangelise England. In the fourteenth century the Church in England was wealthy and powerful; formal worship was magnificent; but, as Chaucer's writings plainly show, there was dire need of a religious revival. Wycliffe saw the need; and, like the Reformers a century and a half later, realised that the Bible must be the basis of Christian teaching. So in order that his "poor preachers" might "faithfully scatter the seed of God's Word," he and his followers produced about the year A.D. 1382 a translation of the Scriptures, made from the Latin Vulgate. The officials of the unreformed Church sought to prevent its circulation. But it spread far and wide, though printing was unknown and only manuscript copies could be obtained. Wycliffe had the insight of a great spiritual leader. May we contend that he knew the religious temperament of his countrymen and divined that they would love the Bible if they could have it in their own tongue?

The First Printed English Bible

By the end of the fifteenth century printing had been discovered, and the great Dutch scholar Erasmus published the first Greek Testament in A.D. 1516. Erasmus lived and lectured at

Cambridge while beginning to prepare his work; and the fame which the University thus gained as a home of the New Learning helped to make it the intellectual centre of the English Reformation. To Cambridge in A.D. 1515 there came an Oxford scholar named William Tindale, who was henceforth to devote his life to translating the Bible from the original Greek and Hebrew. Tindale's New Testament was published in A.D. 1526; and, when he was martyred abroad ten years later, he had finished about half of the Old Testament. Meanwhile, in the year A.D. 1535, Miles Coverdale gave to the world the first printed English Bible. Revised versions then began to appear in rapid succession as scholars and divines worked with enthusiasm and skill in the golden age of English literature. Finally our Authorised Version was published in 1611; and, notwithstanding the greater accuracy of the Revised Version published in 1885, it remains *the* Bible of the English-speaking peoples.

The supreme literary excellence of the Authorised Version has made it the greatest of English classics. Owing to the superb beauty of its language, the Bible has an importance in our literature which is unparalleled elsewhere. It has been well said that its English "lives on the ear like a music that can never be forgotten." To the fortunate chance that it was made in the sixteenth century, when our language was in its vigorous prime, we must attribute its extraordinarily fine quality. Yet, if any one man deserves especial praise for his share in the work, it is Tindale. More than four-fifths both of the New Testament and of the Pentateuch is his; and the influence of his magnificent prose is manifest throughout the whole version. He described himself with sincere humility as "speechless and rude, dull and slow-witted"; but, if he had not the pen of a ready writer, there was magic in his style. As a scholar he was laborious, accurate, and honest. For him "every part of Scripture had one sense and one only, the sense in the mind of the writer." He regarded his work as a Divine Service to which he had been called, and solemnly protested that he never altered one syllable against his conscience. Moreover, he fully realised that the English language is peculiarly fitted to translate the Bible. "The Greek tongue agreeth more with the English than with the Latin. And the properties of the Hebrew tongue agree a thousand times more with the English than with the Latin." Above all, he sought to serve the common people. In early manhood, speaking to one of his Cambridge friends, he said, "If God spare me life, ere many years I will cause the boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scriptures than you do." The spirit which inspired Tindale gave us the Authorised Version.

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the influence of that Version on the English language and on English thought. The Bible made English Puritanism; and the Puritan tradition has fostered in the British and American peoples most of their best and distinctive qualities. From the Bible Milton and Bunyan took the inspiration of their poetry and allegory. In the Bible Cromwell and the Pilgrim Fathers found that which made them honourable, self-reliant, and stedfast. Bible in hand, Wesley and Whitefield transformed their country. In England all the great Victorians, and in America men so diverse as Emerson and Walt Whitman, showed the direct influence of the Authorised Version. It fashioned the art of Browning and George Eliot, Ruskin and Watts. John Bright, supreme among English orators in the nineteenth century, was essentially a man of one book, the Bible. So, too, was Abraham Lincoln, genius alike in statecraft and speech.

The Bible is still the most precious part of the common heritage of the Anglo-Saxon races. The surface of our common culture is littered by transient enthusiasms, vulgar emotions, and moral wreckage; but below strong currents move steadily. In large measure these currents flow from the Bible, which now for four centuries has been the ultimate source of Anglo-Saxon idealism. The Bible has shaped the English language; but it has also been the supreme spiritually-creative force in the civilisation of the British Empire and the American Commonwealth.

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IV

THE ENGLISH BIBLE AS LITERATURE

THE ENGLISH BIBLE AS LITERATURE

SOME considerations of the Bible as literature may well be added to Canon Barnes's scholarly description of its history.

There are people who demur to the study of the Bible as literature on the ground that the Word of God should be spared this kind of examination. Although it is difficult to take the contention seriously it is necessary to answer it. The best reason for studying the Bible as literature is that it *is* literature. The books of the Bible have every characteristic of literature, and in the course of time they have been subject to all the adventures and misadventures which beset literary documents.

To consider the Bible as literature is not to neglect, much less to deny, its sacred character. Indeed, those who still accept the doctrine of literal inspiration should be the first to perceive that the Divine method of expression would be itself divine, and that it would consist in using the most beautiful and moving language known to the men to whom it was delivered. If that be so, then the study of the beauty of the Bible as literature is more than relevant to the general study of the Bible as the Word of God.

§ 1

The Bible and our National Style

The highest advantage of the study of the Bible as literature is that it enables us, in some real measure, to understand what the Bible means. Written originally in Hebrew and Greek, painfully and inaccurately copied, doubtfully translated, transmitted to us through a thousand mists of doctrine and prejudice, it is yet still infused with the poetry, the visions, the metaphor, and the folklore of the East, to all of which we are alien. Thus the Bible, of all books, needs a commentary, and until comparatively recent years the kind of commentary which it has most conspicuously lacked is that which Literature alone can supply. "To understand that the language of the Bible is fluid, passing, and *literary,* not rigid, fixed, and scientific, is the first step towards a right understanding of the Bible," says Matthew Arnold. To read the Bible *literally* is the way to scepticism; to read it as *literature* is the way to essential and reasonable belief. Burns knew this when he wrote his "Cotter's Saturday Night." In two stanzas of that beautiful descriptive poem he presents the two great aspects of the English Bible; its messages to the soul and conscience, and its indestructible literary quality. Take them in this order:

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
  They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er with patriarchal grace,
  The big *ha' Bible,* ance his father's pride:
His bonnet reverently is laid aside,
  His lyart haffets [1] wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
  He wales [2] a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship God," he says, with solemn air.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
  How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare rage
  With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
  Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint and wailing cry;
  Or rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

---

[1] Lyart haffets, grey temples.

[2] Wales, chooses.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

"THE DAWN OF THE REFORMATION"

(After W. T. Jeames, R.A.)

Wycliffe at Lutterworth sending out his "poor preachers" with the translation of the Bible (*circa* 1378)

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

READING THE BIBLE IN THE CRYPT OF OLD ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

(After Sir George Harvey.)

The first-fruit of the Reformation in England was the reading of the Bible by the common people in England in various versions. These were expensive and rare, and for safety the Bible in churches was always chained.

Broadly speaking, in the first stanza we have the Bible as the Word of God, in the second the Bible as literature. The one and the other make that Bible which has passed into the life and speech of the people, ennobling both.

Sir Arthur Quiller Couch, lecturing at Cambridge on "Reading the Bible," has placed before his students a few great sentences like these:

> Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.
>
> And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.
>
> So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality . . .

Then he says:

> When a nation has achieved this manner of diction, these rhythms for its dearest beliefs, a literature is surely established. . . . The Authorised Version set a seal on our national style. . . . It has cadences homely and sublime, yet so harmonises them that the voice is always one. Simple men—holy men of heart like Izaak Walton and Bunyan—have their lips touched and speak to the homelier tune.

Bunyan derived his thought and his style from the English Bible. And Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* and his *Pilgrim's Progress* lead us back to this well of homely religion and English undefiled. Bunyan knew the Authorised Version of the English Bible as perhaps no other man has known it. Its language became his breath. In passage after passage of *The Pilgrim's Progress* we seem to be reading the Bible through the medium of his own words. Take these words of Mr. Greatheart in the Valley of the Shadow:

> This is like doing business in great Waters, or like going down into the deep; this is like being in the heart of the

> Sea, and like going down to the Bottoms of the Mountains: Now it seems as if the Earth with its bars were about us for ever. But let them that walk in darkness and have no light, trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon their God. For my Part, as I have told you already, I have gone often through this Valley, and have been much harder put to it than now I am, and yet you see I am alive. I would not boast, for that I am not mine own Saviour. But I trust we shall have a good deliverance. Come let us pray for light to Him that can lighten our darkness, and that can rebuke, not only these, but all the Satans in Hell.

The language of the Bible shaped the speech of England, and Bunyan learned to use that language better than anyone else. In *The Pilgrim's Progress* the common people found no word or sentence they did not understand.

Tributes to the Authorised Version

The Professor of English Literature in Cambridge University continues:

> Proud men, scholars—Milton, Sir Thomas Browne—practise the rolling Latin sentence, but upon the rhythms of the Bible they, too, fall back. . . . The precise man Addison cannot excel one parable in brevity or in heavenly clarity: the two parts of Johnson's antithesis come to no more than this, *"Our Lord has gone up to the sound of a trumpet; with the sound of a trump our Lord has gone up."* The Bible controls its enemy Gibbon as surely as it haunts the curious music of a light sentence of Thackeray's. It is in everything we see, hear, feel, because it is in us, in our blood.

Coleridge said that it "will keep any man from being vulgar in point of style." Assuredly it kept the Bedford tinker from being vulgar, and hardly less Daniel Defoe. The Bible profoundly influenced Ruskin's style; "it is ingrained," says his biographer, "in the texture of almost every piece from his pen." Macaulay refers to our Bible as "a book which, if everything else in our language should perish, would alone suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power." Milton declared: "There are no songs comparable to the songs of Zion, no orations equal to those of the prophets." Landor wrote to a friend: "I am heartily glad to witness your veneration for a book which, to say nothing of its holiness or authority, contains more specimens of genius and taste than any other volume in existence." And Hobbes had the literary study of the Bible in mind when he shrewdly wrote in "Leviathan":

> It is not the bare words but the scope of the writer that giveth the true light by which any writing is to be interpreted; and they that insist upon *single texts,* without considering the *main design,* can derive nothing from them clearly; but rather by casting atoms of Scripture as dust before men's eyes, make everything more obscure than it is.

It has sometimes been asked whether the Authorised Version of 1604–11 could have been done without the aid of men of letters, and even one or more poets. How could the cadences of the Psalms, the sublime questions and answers of the Book of Job, the rhapsodies of Isaiah, and the eloquence of Paul at Athens have been rendered by forty-seven scholars of whom not one has left his mark on literature? The extraordinary suggestion has been made that Shakespeare who, in 1604, was at the height of his genius, may have been called in to give poetry and majesty to our Bible. Such surmises are not needed. The English language was then at its highest pitch and purity. Shakespeare had written most of his plays; two years earlier he had written *Hamlet.* The Elizabethan lyrical poets had taught Englishmen the music of their tongue. Spenser's verse was the river of that music. Dramatists like Massinger, Marlowe, Beaumont and Fletcher, Marston, and Webster had brought up their cohorts of words and splendid phrasings. Literature was in the air. Never had there been a time so favourable to great results, nor has there been one since.

§ 2

The English Versions

This is only part of the matter. The forty-seven did not, as is commonly supposed, produce a creative version of the Bible. As Canon Barnes has pointed out, they produced a new and better one. The literary excellence of the Authorised Version was discovered rather than achieved. The new translators found it in all the English versions on which they worked, chiefly in those of Tindale and Coverdale. Wycliffe's translation from the Vulgate, completed by other hands so early as 1388, aided them the least. The wellspring was William Tindale, who had added to scholarship a command of noble English. He worked on the basis of Erasmus's Greek and Latin texts, the Vulgate, and Luther's German translations. On one side of the door of St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street the head of Tindale is carved in stone. The journalists who day by day inform or beguile the million are reminded of the man who vowed he would make the Bible known to the English ploughboy. And he did. When the Emperor Charles had him strangled in what is now a suburb of Brussels the ploughboy was on the way to read the Scriptures in the language of his fathers, and the habit of reading was being planted in England.

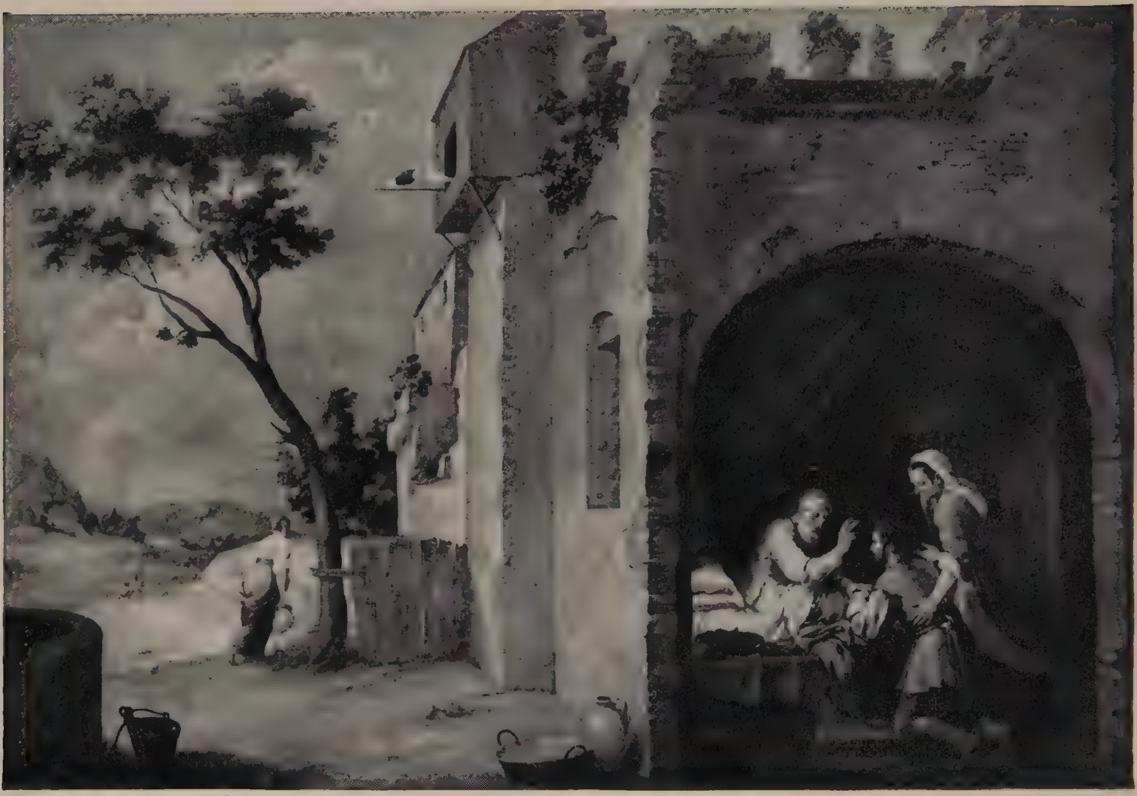
Miles Coverdale's Bible of 1535 was translated from the Latin and German with much reference to Tindale, and is often superior to Tindale's in its music. Matthew's Bible, edited by John Rogers, the Smithfield martyr, appeared in 1537 and contained unpublished versions by Tindale of the book of Joshua onwards to the end of the second book of Chronicles. This Bible, something of a patchwork, was followed by the Great Bible, edited drastically by Coverdale; it was the first English Bible printed with government authority.

Photo: Anderso

"ST. PAUL PREACHING AT ATHENS," BY RAPHAEL

The Vatican, Rome.

"For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring."—*Acts* xvii.



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"ISAAC BLESSING JACOB," BY MURILLO

The Hermitage, St. Petersburg.

"God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: let people serve thee and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."—*Genesis* xxvii.

A rather later version is of interest because it was translated at Geneva by English exiles from England who had fled the Marian persecutions. While they laboured under the Alpine snows the fires of Smithfield were smoking. They were thus occupied for two years, and had not finished their revision when Elizabeth's accession made them free to return. This "Genevan" Bible was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth in 1560. It was more literal than those of Tindale and Coverdale, and also better founded on the Hebrew for the Old Testament and the Greek for the New. It is still known as the "Breeches Bible," from its rendering of Genesis iii. 7: "They sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves breeches."

The later Bishops' Bible, 1568, superintended by Archbishop Parker, was virtually the immediate forerunner of the Authorised Version. It became known as the "Treacle Bible" from its text (Jeremiah viii. 22): "Is there no treacle in Gilead?"

Four Versions Compared

When, therefore, King James's translators met in Westminster and Cambridge to give us the Bible of to-day they had a wealth of original and interpreted literature on which to work. They were instructed to follow the Bishops' Bible as closely as possible. Actually, their finest passages are from Tindale. It is instructive to take a view of the development of the language and literary quality of the English Bible, by quoting, in succession, the renderings of one short passage, Hebrews i. 7–9, as they appear in four versions, using the conspectus appended to Dr. Frederic G. Kenyon's *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts.* As he remarks, it will be seen how greatly Tindale's translation has influenced the others, not least the Authorised Version:

Tindale, 1525

> And vnto the angels he sayth: He maketh his angels spretes, and his ministers flammes of fyre. But vnto the

sonne he sayth: God thy seate shal be for ever and ever. The cepter of thy kyngdom is a right cepter. Thou hast loved rightewesnes and hated iniquitie: Wherfore hath god, which is thy god, anoynted the with the oyle off gladnes above thy felowes.

The Bishops' Bible, 1568

7. And vnto the Angels he sayth: He maketh his Angels spirites, and his ministers a flambe of fyre.

8. But vnto the sonne (he sayth) Thy seate O God (shalbe) for euer and euer: The scepter of thy kingdom (is) a scepter of ryghteousnesse.

9. Thou hast loued ryghteousnesse, and hated iniquitie: Therefore God, euen thy God, hath annoynted thee with the oyle of gladnesse, aboue thy fellowes.

The Authorised Version, 1611 (*in the original spelling*)

7. And of the Angels he saith: Who maketh his Angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

8. But vnto the Sonne, *he saith,* Thy throne, O God, *is* for euer and euer: a scepter of righteousnesse *is* the scepter of thy kingdome.

9. Thou hast loued righteousnesse, and hated iniquitie, therefore God, *euen* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oyle of gladnesse aboue thy fellowes.

The Revised Version, 1881

7. And of the angels he saith,
    Who maketh his angels winds,
    And his ministers a flame of fire:
8. but of the Son *he saith,*
    Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:
    And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.
    Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity;
    Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
    With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

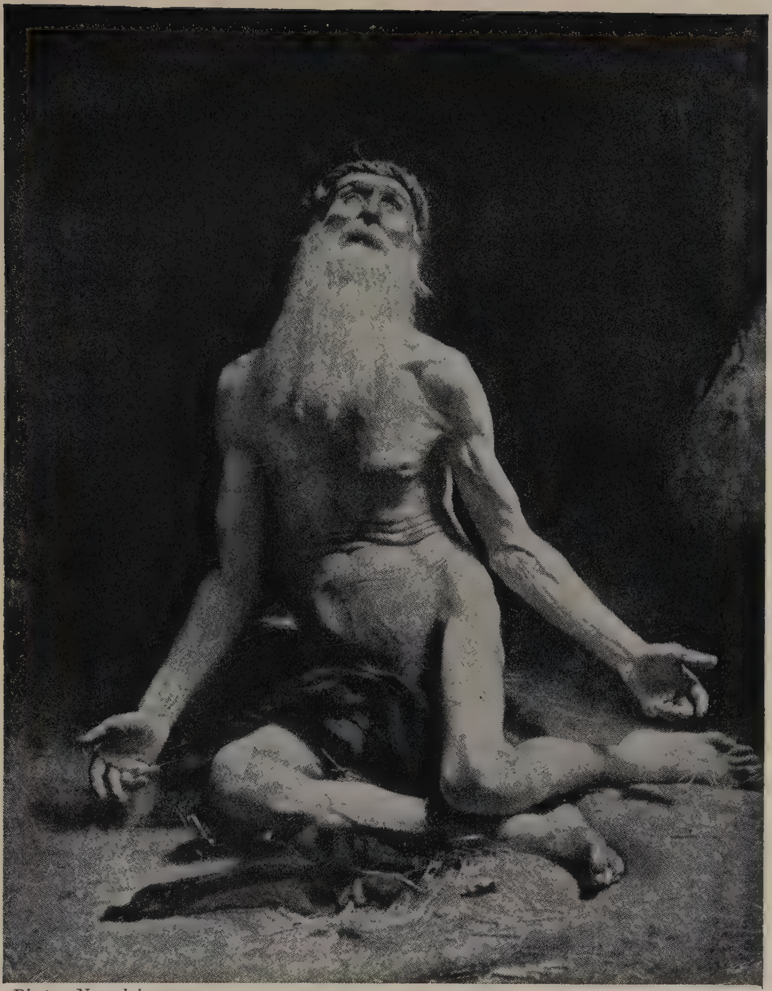
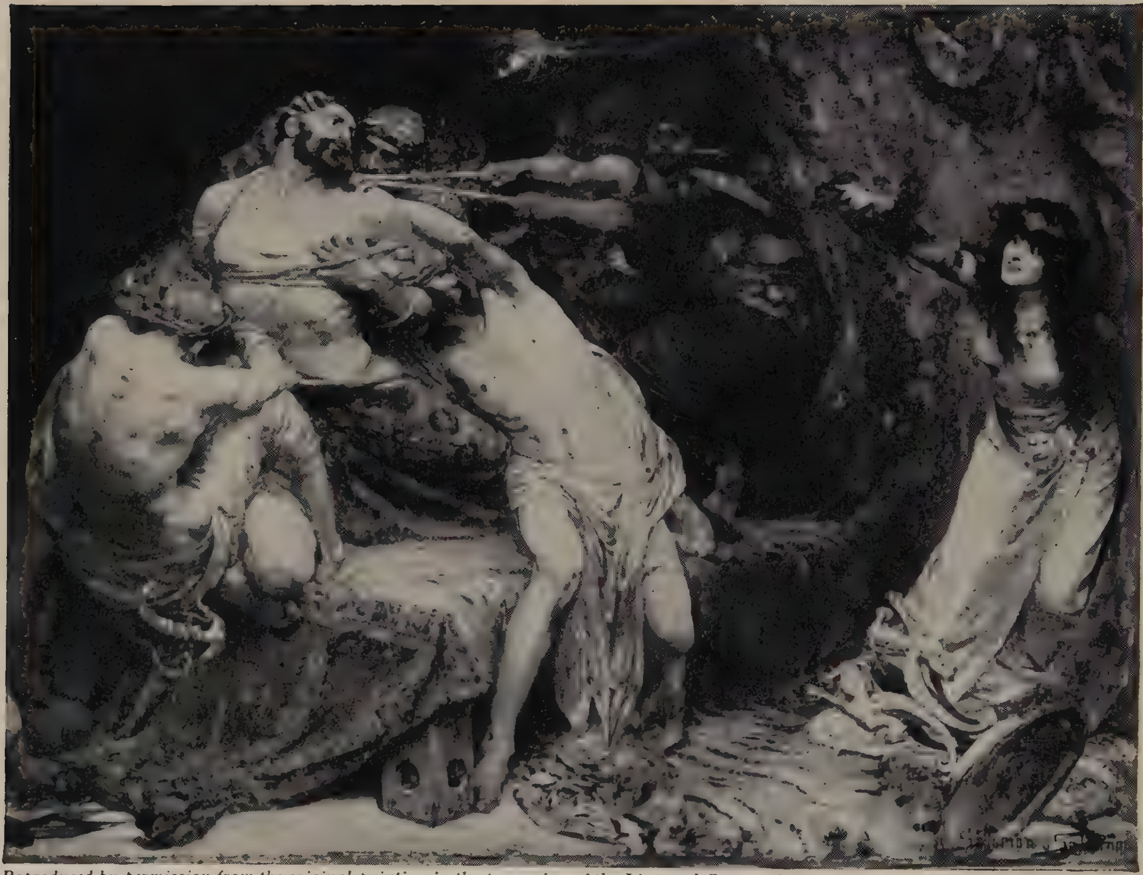


Photo: Neurdein.

"JOB IN HIS AFFLICTION," BY LÉON BONNAT

The Luxembourg, Paris.

"Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again? . . . Are not my days few? Cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return."—*Job* x.



Reproduced by permission from the original painting in the possession of the Liverpool Corporation.

"SAMSON AND DELILAH," BY SOLOMON J. SOLOMON, R.A,

§ 3

An Error of Form

In the last version the passage is printed, as it ought to be, as poetry. In our Authorised Version, prose is cut up into "verses" (an arrangement unknown until the Genevan translators adopted it), but all the sweet or magnificent outbursts of poetry are printed as prose. For these reasons Professor Moulton declares roundly in his invaluable work, *The Literary Study of the Bible,* that the Bible is the worst printed book in the world. The eye is not allowed to help the mind in recognising its literary structure. It is as though we printed the poems of Shelley and Wordsworth as prose. Thus even the full beauty of the last words of the Sermon on the Mount is veiled by the form given to them. Yet these words are a perfect example of that Hebrew poetry into which the prose of the Bible suddenly breaks when the feeling is exalted or the imagination touched:

> Everyone therefore which heareth these words of mine,
>   and doeth them,
> shall be likened unto a Wise Man,
> which built his house upon the Rock:
>   And the rain descended,
>   and the floods came,
>   and the winds blew,
>   and beat upon that house;
> and it fell not;
> for it was founded upon the Rock.
>
> And everyone that heareth these words of mine,
>   and doeth them not,
> shall be likened unto a Foolish Man,
> which built his house upon the Sand:
>   And the rain descended,
>   and the floods came,
>   and the winds blew,
>   and smote upon that house;
> and it fell:
> and great was the fall thereof!

These stanzas are from the Revised Version of 1881, in which several expressions are changed for the better. Here we have a beautiful poem in the free verse of the Hebrews. Note its perfect parallelism.

Parallelism in Hebrew Poetry

Parallelism of thought and expression—a sort of magnified alliteration—is the distinctive mark of all Hebrew poetry, of its proverbial literature, and of much of its narrative. Professor Moulton well described its movement. "Like the swing of a pendulum to and fro, like the tramp of an army marching in step, the versification of the Bible moves with a rhythm of parallel lines"; and he illustrated this neatly to his students by referring them to verses 8–15 of the 105th Psalm. First read the passage, omitting all the alternate or parallel lines, thus:

> He hath remembered his convenant for ever: the covenant which he made with Abraham, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute, saying, "Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan," when they were but a few men in number, and they went about from nation to nation. He suffered no man to do them wrong, saying, "Touch not mine anointed ones."

You are now to read the passage in full, that is preserving all the parallelisms. What was prose is suddenly transmuted into a grand movement of verse:

He hath remembered his covenant for ever,
  The word which he commanded to a thousand generations;
The covenant which he made with Abraham,
  And his oath unto Isaac;
And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute,
  To Israel for an everlasting covenant:
Saying, "Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan,
  The lot of your inheritance":
When they were but a few men in number;
  Yea, very few, and sojourners in it;

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

HAGAR AND ISHMAEL

"And she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. And the water was spent in the bottle."—*Genesis* xxi.

And they went about from nation to nation,
  From one kingdom to another people.
He suffered no man to do them wrong:
  Yea, he reproved kings for their sakes;
Saying, "Touch not mine anointed ones,
  And do my prophets no harm."

The entire Book of Job, excepting only the first two chapters, and part of the last, is poetry, and ought never to have been printed in any other form. Only then can we appreciate the full majesty of such a passage as this:

Hast thou given the horse strength?
Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?
Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper?
The glory of his nostrils is terrible.
He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength:
He goeth on to meet the armed men.
He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted:
Neither turneth he back from the sword.
The quiver rattleth against him,
The glittering spear and the shield.
He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage:
Neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.
He saith among the trumpets, Ha, Ha:
And he smelleth the battle afar off,
The thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

Or this:

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Declare, if thou hast understanding.
Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest?
Or who hath stretched the line upon it?
Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?
Or who laid the corner stone thereof?
When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy.
Or who shut up the sea with the doors,
When it broke forth as if it had issued out of the womb?
When I made the cloud the garment thereof,
And thick darkness a swaddling band for it,

And brake up for it my decreed place,
And set bars and doors,
And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further:
And here shall thy proud waves be stayed.

This parallelism obtains through all the moods of Hebrew poetry, though with variations which cannot here be displayed. And it is found to be almost miraculously appropriate to literary forms which are far apart. It gives pungency to mere worldly wisdom, as in Proverbs vi, 6:

Go to the ant, thou sluggard;
Consider her ways, and be wise:
Which having no guide,
Overseer, or ruler,
Provideth her meat in the summer,
And gathereth her food in the harvest.
How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?
And when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?
Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep:
So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth,
And thy want as an armed man.

In passing, note that wonderfully true and deadly simile, "as one that travelleth"—one that has far to come, may be, but yet comes nearer and nearer and at last arrives like footsore doom.

But now consider the different effect of the principle of repetition in the barbaric song of Deborah:

The kings came and fought,
Then fought the kings of Canaan
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo.
They took no gain of money.
They fought from heaven;
The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
The river of Kishon swept them away,
That ancient river, the river Kishon.
O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.

Photo: *Brogi.*

"THE MEETING OF JACOB AND RACHEL," BY PACECCO DE ROSA

National Museum, Naples.

"And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them."—*Genesis* xxix.

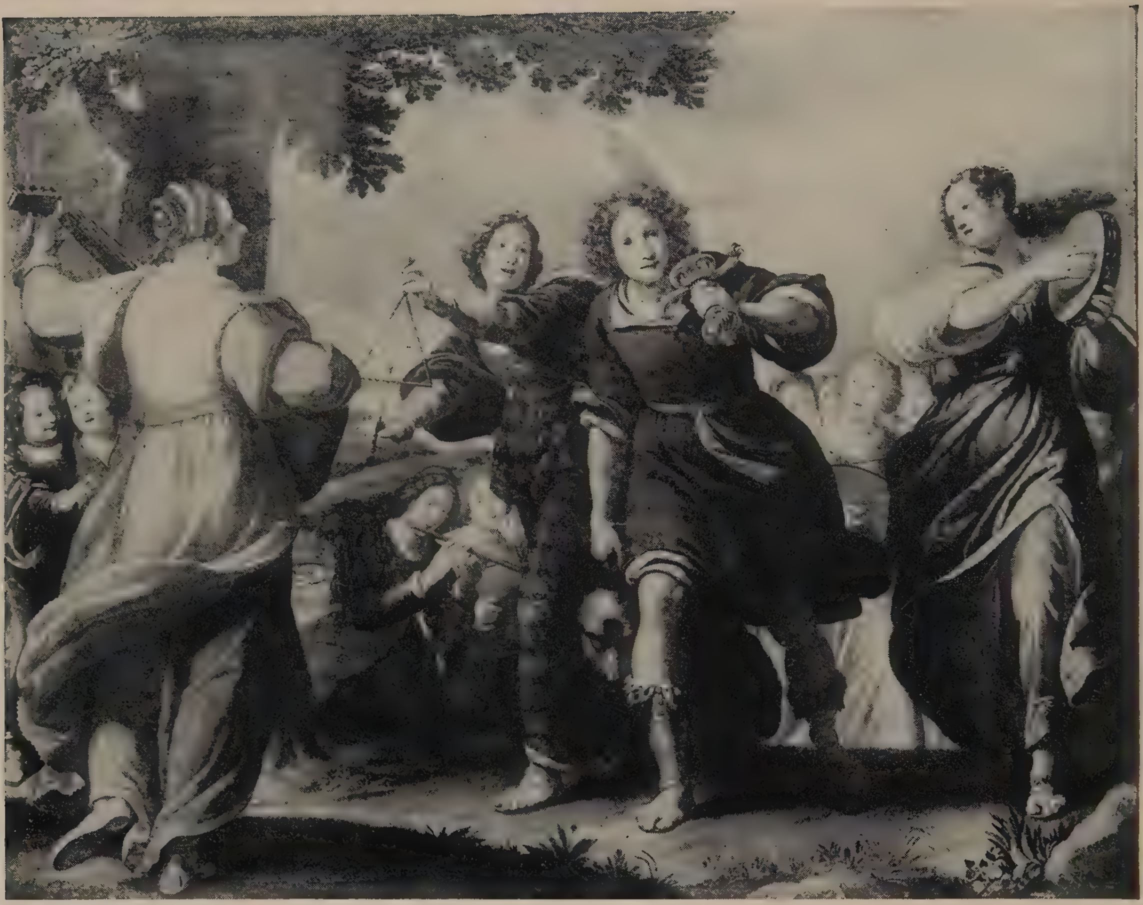


Photo: *Neurdein.*

"THE TRIUMPH OF DAVID," BY MATTEO ROSSELLI

The Louvre, Paris.

"And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem."—1 *Samuel* xvii.

Then were the horsehoofs broken,
By the means of the pransings, the pransings of their mighty ones.

Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be,
Blessed shall she be above women in the tent.
He asked water, and she gave him milk;
She brought forth butter in a lordly dish.
She put her hand to the nail,
And her right hand to the workmen's hammer;
And with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head,
When she had pierced and stricken through his temples.
At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down:
At her feet he bowed, he fell:
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

"A Balance of Thought"

In the Hebrew literature this principle of repetition—found in all others in degree—is so predominant that it simplifies the whole problem of translation. Matthew Arnold pointed out that by reason of its comparative omnipresence the effect of Hebrew poetry "can be preserved and rendered in a foreign language as the effect of other great poetry cannot." The effect of Homer, of Virgil, or of Dante can never be successfully rendered because the literary architecture of these poets has to be pulled to pieces and cannot be rebuilt to alien music. "Isaiah's, on the other hand, is a poetry, as is well known, of parallelism; it depends not on metre and rhyme, but on a balance of thought, conveyed by a corresponding balance of sentence; and the effect of this *can* be transferred to another language." One may open the book of Isaiah almost at random and discover the truth of this law. Take this passage:

> The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be laid low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it to-

> gether: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely all flesh is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

This passage, like hundreds of others, serves to illustrate another habit of Hebrew poetry which has everything to do with its permanence. Metaphor is the soul of poetry, and here all the metaphors are simple and natural. The visions called up are such as are native to man's understanding in all ages: the pathless desert, the frowning hills, the grass of the field.

§ 4

The Hebrew Mind

The Hebrew mind was simple and the Hebrew eye was fixed on the common objects of life. The sun, the moon, and the stars, the wind and the rain, the darkness and depth of the sea, the cedars of Lebanon, the bulls of Bashan, the well or the pool, the winepress, the mill, the corn yellow to harvest, the green pastures and still waters, the rose of Sharon, the great rock in a weary land, the potter's wheel, the husbandman's toil, the sparrow and the eagle, the wild goats and calving hinds, the hen gathering her chickens, silver and gold, spear and shield, flesh and bone—such are the objects of life, common to all ages, to which these old poets went for their imagery. In that immortal rhapsody on love at first sight, Solomon's Song, how marvellously are the swoonings and raptures of love expressed through the medium of everyday things:

> Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah,
> Comely as Jerusalem,
> Terrible as an army with banners.
> Turn away thine eyes from me,

For they have overcome me:
Thy hair is a flock of goats
That appear from Gilead.
Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep
Which go up from the washing . . .
As a piece of pomegranate are thy temples
Within thy locks.

. . . . . .

Who is she that looketh forth as the morning,
Fair as the moon,
Clear as the sun,
And terrible as an army with banners?
I went down into the garden of nuts
To see the fruits of the valley,
And to see whether the vine flourished,
And the pomegranates budded.
Or ever I was aware, my soul made me
Like the chariots of Ammi-nadib.

Beyond this realism Hebrew poetry never stretches. The abstract is unknown to it.

Yet there is another secret of the permanence of the Bible as literature at once simpler and greater. Human nature and its working-out in reward or punishment, the wisdom of life and the penalties of ignorance or neglect, have not changed since Abraham sat in the door of his tent in the heat of the day. They have not changed since he rose up early and saw Sodom and Gomorrah go up "as the smoke of a furnace." They have not changed since Sarah was jealous of Hagar, and Abraham groaned to cast out his bondwoman because of his son Ishmael; nor since he saddled his ass to take Isaac into the land Moriah to be a burnt offering to Jehovah. They have not changed since Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide, expectant of his bride, and saw the camels coming; nor since Esau was honest and foolish, and Jacob wily and wise; nor since Rachel came to water her father's sheep at the well of Haran; nor since Joseph's brethren said, "Behold this dreamer cometh," and cast him into a pit, and afterwards knew the dreamer as the master of Egypt and their own protector. They have not changed since Moses, accepting his own doom, said to Israel:

> The eternal God is thy refuge,
> And underneath are the everlasting arms;

nor since Ruth said to her husband's mother:

> Intreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.

They have not changed since David triumphed over Goliath or Samson succumbed to the craft of Delilah.

If we turn to the New Testament, where in all the literature of all peoples shall we find a more moving story than this?

> And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a Prophet, mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people. And how the chief Priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he, which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the Sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of Angels, which said

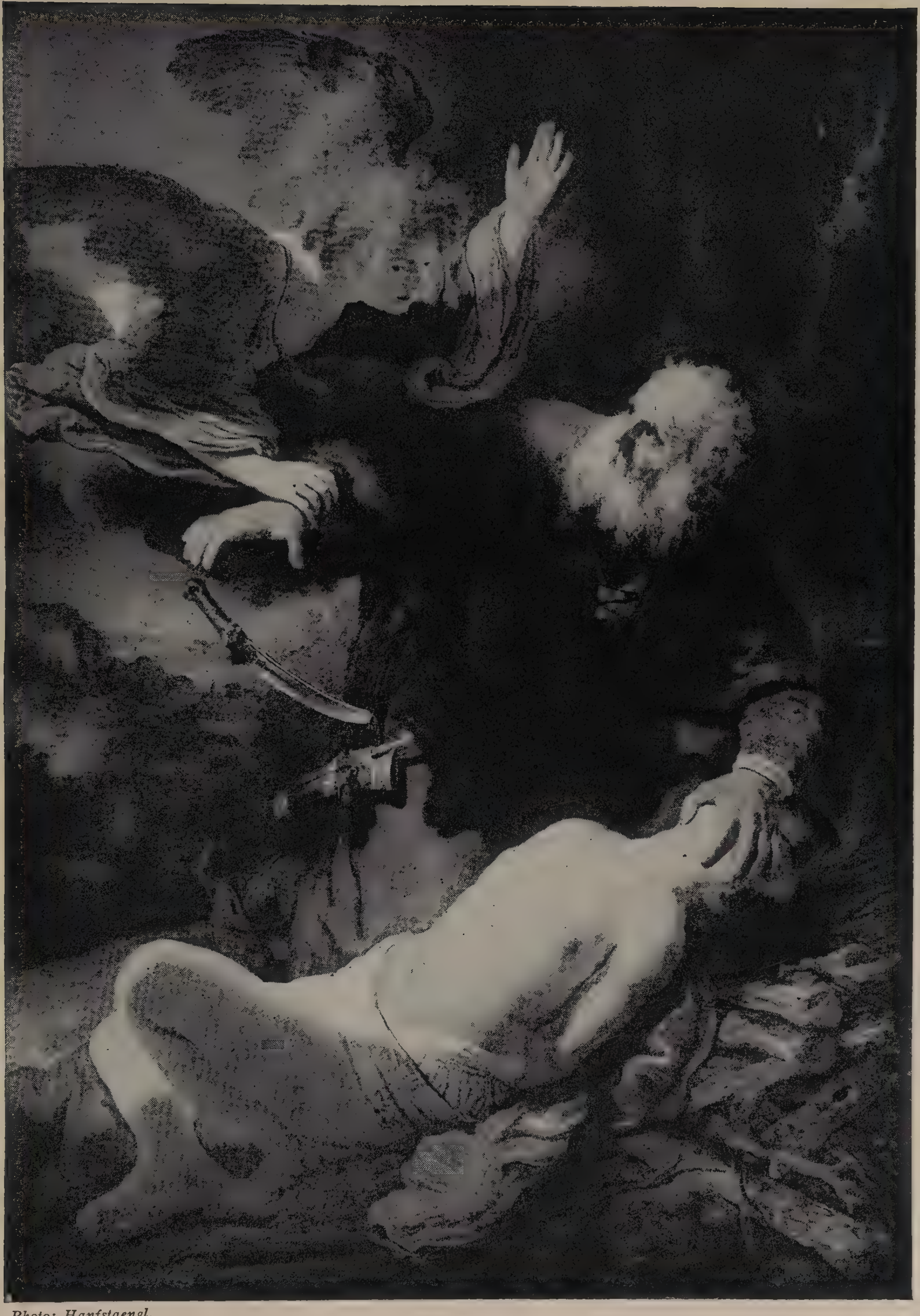


Photo: Hanfstaengl.

"THE SACRIFICE OF ABRAHAM," BY REMBRANDT

The Hermitage, St. Petersburg

"And the Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."—*Genesis* xxii.

Photo: Alinari.

"THE SUPPER AT EMMAUS. BY REMBRANDT VAN RYN

The Louvre, Paris.

"And their eyes were opened, and they knew him."—*Luke* xxiv

> that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us, went to the Sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said, but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went, and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent: And he went in, to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one unto another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?

Simplicity and beauty of narrative can go no further.

Other Hebrew Poetry

The sacred associations of the New Testament make it difficult to treat some of its most sublime passages as literature. In a lower degree the same may be said of the Old Testament. But there is a portion of Hebrew literature which, being apart from the whole and yet of it, can be studied with deep advantage and may even be the best door by which to enter the subject. We refer, of course, to the Apocrypha. At the age of sixty-three Dr. Samuel Johnson, the best-read man of his time, and one of the best-read men of all time, wrote in his diary, "I have never yet read the Apocrypha." Inasmuch as the Apocrypha contains literature of surpassing beauty, and a wisdom of life hardly less exalted than any that we find in the Old Testament, this was a strange confession. It went, indeed, a little farther than the facts, for Johnson added, "I have sometimes looked into the Maccabees, and read a chapter containing the question, *Which is* *the strongest?*—I think in Esdras." The story is one of the finest in the Apocrypha. It tells how three young men of the guard of King Darius proposed that they should compete for the utmost favour of the King, to sit next to him, and to be called his cousin; and that the winner of this essay competition (for such in fact it was) should be he who most wisely answered the question, "What is the strongest thing in the world?"

The first wrote, "Wine is the strongest," and gave his reasons; the second wrote, "The King is the strongest," and gave his reasons; the third wrote, "Women are strongest, but above all things truth beareth away the victory." They read their replies before the King and a great concourse. The third competitor showed that women had borne the King, and all rulers, and all people, and that they led and ruled all men by their love and beauty, and their spells. But he concluded:

> Great is the truth, and stronger than all things. All the earth calleth upon the truth, and the heaven blesseth it, all works shake and tremble at it, and with it is no unrighteous thing.
>
> Wine is wicked, the King is wicked, women are wicked, all the children of men are wicked, and such are all their wicked works, and there is no truth in them. In their unrighteousness also they shall perish.
>
> As for the truth it endureth, and is always strong, it liveth and conquereth evermore.
>
> With her there is no accepting of persons, or rewards, but she doeth the things that are just, and refraineth from all unjust and wicked things, and all men do well like of her works. Neither in her judgment is any unrighteousness, and she is the strength, kingdom, power and majesty of all ages. Blessed be the God of truth.

All the people shouted assent, and Darius told the young man to ask of him what he would, "and more than was appointed in the writing," and to sit next to him, and be called his cousin.

So that, although Dr. Johnson had not read the Apocrypha, he had read a passage which must have appealed profoundly to him as a man who once said humbly, "Sir, I considered myself as entrusted with a certain portion of truth," and on another occasion, "Without truth there must be a dissolution of society."

The Book of the Wisdom of Solomon contains splendid passages. Hear the writer's praise of Wisdom:

Wisdom reacheth from one end to another mightily,
And sweetly doth she order all things.
I loved her and sought her out,
From my youth I desired to make her my spouse,
And I was a lover of her beauty.
In that she is conversant with God, she magnifieth her nobility:
Yea, the Lord of all things himself loved her.

. . . .

If a man desire much experience:
She knoweth things of old, and conjectureth aright what is to come:
She knoweth the subtleties of speeches, and can expound dark sentences:
She forseeth signs and wonders, and the events of seasons and times.
Therefore I purposed to take her to me to live with me,
Knowing that she would be a counsellor of good things,
And a comfort in cares and grief.

Thus is Wisdom praised, but now hear Wisdom praise herself in the wild and lofty music of Hebrew poetry through the pen of Jesus the son of Sirach, the writer of "Ecclesiasticus":

I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus,
And as a cypress tree upon the mountains of Hermon.
I was exalted like a palm tree in Engaddi,
And as a rose-plant in Jericho,
And as a fair olive tree in a pleasant field,
And grew up as a plane tree by the water.
I gave a sweet smell like cinnamon, and aspalathus,
And I yielded a pleasant odour like the best myrrh,
As Galbanum and Onyx, and sweet Storax,
And as the fume of frankincense in the Tabernacle.

. . . .

I also came out as a brook from a river,
And as a conduit into a garden.
I said, I will water my best garden,
And will water abundantly my garden bed:
And lo, my brook became a river,
And my river became a sea.
I will yet make doctrine to shine as the morning,
And will send forth her light afar off:
I will yet pour out doctrine as prophecy,
And leave it to all ages for ever.

Such is the exalted poetry, such the exhaustion of language, to be found in the Apocrypha.

Two Noble Eulogies

In addition, it is packed with worldly wisdom, common sense, shrewd counsels about marriage and friendship, and lending and borrowing, and bargaining, and tact, and everyday prudence. One could show some of our best-known proverbs can be traced to these books. But we conclude by quoting a passage in which the writer we have just quoted turns his eyes—with a charity surpassing, perhaps, anything in the canonical books of the Old Testament—on the average man. After picturing the ploughman, the ox-driver, the carpenter, the graver of seals, the smith, and the poor potter, each at his work, he exclaims:

Without these cannot a city be inhabited.
And they shall not dwell where they will, nor go up and down:
They shall not be sought for in public counsel,
Nor sit high in the congregation:
They shall not sit on the Judges' seat,
Nor understand the sentence of judgment:
They cannot declare justice, and judgment,
And they shall not be found where parables are spoken,
But they will maintain the state of the world
And all their desire is in the work of their craft.

That may not be the whole of man's civic wisdom, or of his social vision, to-day, but if not it is one of the noblest eulogies ever penned. It deserves to be as well known as that great tribute to genius and leadership in the same book:

Let us now praise famous men,
And our Fathers that begat us.
The Lord hath wrought great glory by them,
Through his great power from the beginning,
Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms,
Men renowned for their power,
Giving counsel by their understanding,
And declaring prophecies. . . .
Such as found out musical tunes,
And recited verses in writing,
Rich men furnished with ability,
Living peaceably in their habitations.
All these were honoured in their generations,
And were the glory of their times.

. . . .

Their seed shall remain for ever,
And their glory shall not be blotted out.
Their bodies are buried in peace,
But their name liveth for evermore.

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V

THE SACRED BOOKS OF THE EAST

THE SACRED BOOKS OF THE EAST

EVERY religion has its sacred book—generally a collection of hymns, legends, theological speculation, and directions for ceremonial rites. There is one curious difference between the Bible of the Christians and any other of the world's sacred books. Christianity is mainly the religion of the Western world—of Europe and America—but its Bible came to the West from the East. The Sacred Books with which this chapter is concerned were for the most part the creations of the countries where they are still held in veneration, and when that is not the case, as with the writings of Gautama the Buddha and Zoroaster, of contiguous countries. Wisdom comes from the East, but the wisdom that remains in the East is far less virile wisdom than the wisdom that has travelled westward. With the exception of the Koran and the Granth of the Sikhs, the Sacred Books of the East had their origin in a remote antiquity, and are sometimes the almost haphazard collection of the work of many men living in many ages.

§ 1

THE VEDAS OF THE BRAHMANS

Thirty-three thousand Gods

The first of the Sacred Books in order of antiquity are the Vedas of the Brahmans. The Hindus, the adherents of the social conventions and complex polytheism generally known as Hinduism, form 70 per cent. of the population of the Indian peninsula.

Racially they are in part descended from the Aryans, who, in an early stage of the world's history, crossed the Himalayas from the high plateau which was the cradle of the Aryan race. As is, of course, well known, all the great European races—the Latins, the Teutons, the Celts, and the Scandinavians—are of Aryan descent, as are the people of Persia. India was already thickly inhabited when the Aryans moved south, bringing with them their religion and their culture. The consequence was a mixture of races, the Aryan element retaining the position of an aristocracy through the caste system, and the development of a curious and almost incomprehensible religion. Hinduism, to apply one generic name to the system which includes the worship of thirty-three thousand different gods, almost every village having its own particular deity, is a degradation of Brahmanism, which, in its original pure form, was brought from the north by the Aryan invaders four thousand years ago.

Most religions owe their institution to one great personality—Christianity to Jesus Christ, Buddhism to Buddha, Confucianism to Confucius, and so on. Hinduism and Brahmanism, on the other hand, cannot be traced back to any one great teacher. Orthodox Brahmanism teaches the existence of an all-embracing spirit called Brahma, the original cause and the ultimate goal of all living things. At its beginning, therefore, Brahmanism was as absolutely monotheistic as Mohammedanism itself. But with the conception of an abstract all-embracing deity there arose a second belief in the existence of three great gods, each representing one aspect of absolute power. These gods are Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver; and Siva, the destroyer. According to an Indian legend, the first Brahma created the primordial waters, and in them placed a seed which became a golden egg. In this egg Brahma, the creator, was born, and after his birth he created the heaven and the earth from the two halves of the shell from which he had come. Another myth states that Brahma was born from a lotus which grew out of the body of the god Vishnu.

Brahma, the creator, is usually represented as a bearded man with four heads and four hands. One hand holds a sceptre, the emblem of power; another a bundle of leaves representing the Vedas, the sacred books which will presently be described; another a bottle of water from the Ganges, the Hindu sacred river; and the fourth a string of beads, of course representing prayer. It should be said that though Brahma is one of the three great titular deities of Brahmanism and Hinduism, he is by no means a popular god. In all India there are only four temples dedicated to his worship, and he possesses far fewer devotees than the gods of purely local eminence.

The Castes

The most important characteristic of the Hindu social system is supplied by the castes—a religious creation. There were originally four castes—the Brahmins, the priests and teachers; the Kshatriyas, the warriors; the Vaisyas, farmers, merchants, and landowners; and the Sudras, the hewers of wood and drawers of water. In the course of the ages, these four original castes have been subdivided into hundreds of minor castes, but with all the changes, the Brahmans, who took their name from the god Brahma, have retained their pre-eminent position. Unlike most priests, the Brahmans marry, and generally marry within their own caste, and they are undoubtedly more purely Aryan than any other modern Indians.

In the religion of the Hindu village to-day with its beast-shaped gods; its faith in scores of amulets—dogs' teeth, crocodiles' teeth, the tusks of boars and elephants—its elaborate sacrificial ritual and countless prayers, little remains of the original Brahmanism except the belief in the transmigration of souls and in the doctrine of Karma, which teaches that after many experiences in different bodies, the number of which is determined by the good or evil deeds done in the flesh, the soul finally finds release from individuality and is reabsorbed in

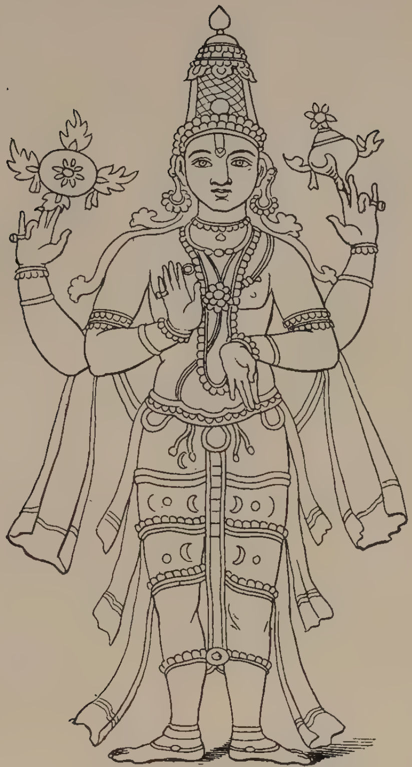
Brahma, the all-embracing spirit. The doctrine, in other words, is that each individual soul is like Brahma and has neither beginning nor end; the condition of every man's existence is the consequence of his acts in a previous existence. The soul, it is conceived, may have renewed individual existence in varying living forms until it is finally "freed from all taint of individuality and released from all activity or suffering," and finds its eternal bliss in the all-embracing spirit Brahma.

A Feat of Memory

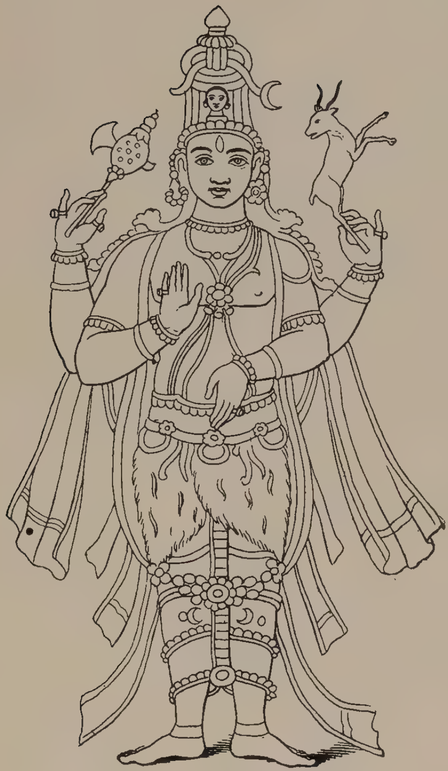
One must note the stubborn way in which Brahmanism and Hinduism have continued to exist despite the idealistic teaching of Gautama, the Buddha, despite the forceful and generally successful proselytism of Moslem conquerors, and despite all the efforts of Christian missions. The Brahman remains the teacher of the Indian people and the custodian of their traditions, and the Brahman still learns by heart the verses of the Vedas, the sacred writings which were recited thousands of years ago before the ancestors of these Brahman priests made their southward trek. When the Vedas were finally written out, they were written in Sanscrit, now a dead language, which bears the same relation to the languages of India as Latin bears to Italian, and which has been preserved in the Vedas exactly as Latin has been preserved in the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church. Though the Vedas now exist in manuscript, the pious Brahman, as we have said, still learns them by heart, since it was written: "Those who sell the Vedas, and even those who write them, those also who defile them, they shall go to hell."

The word Veda means knowledge. The Vedas consist of four books of hymns and prayers, four collections of prose writings explaining the origin and the meaning of the hymns and the prayers, and two collections of theological speculations based on the poetical texts.

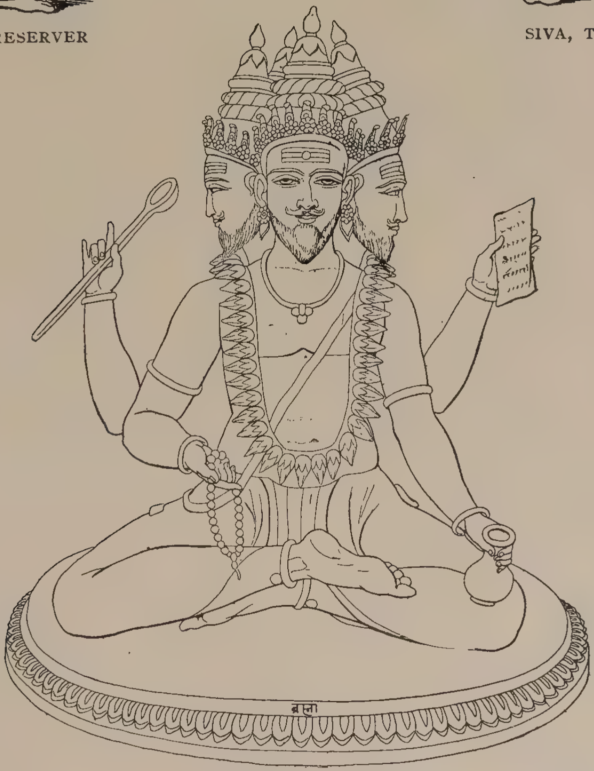
The hymns of the *Rig-Veda* are at least three thousand years



VISHNU, THE PRESERVER



SIVA, THE DESTROYER



BRAHMA, THE CREATOR

These drawings show the three principal gods of ancient Brahmanism, each representing one of the qualities of the godhead.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

BUDDHA PREACHING

(Statue discovered at Sarnath, 1904.)

The great Indian philosopher, Gautama the Buddha, lived about 500 B.C. He taught that "deliverance from suffering is to be obtained through the suppression of desire."

old, that is, probably three hundred years older than the oldest book in the Bible, but they record the religious beliefs of a far more distant age, of the time when the Aryans were still living on the tableland north of the Himalayas, and before they had begun their emigrations westward to become the ancestors of the modern European peoples. So in these Vedas we have almost the words of a generation of men, from whom we are descended and who existed ages before the Greeks and the Romans.

The following are striking passages taken from the Upanishads, the philosophic section of the Vedas. The quotations are from Dr. L. D. Barnett's *Brahma Knowledge:*

> Made of mind, bodied in breath, shaped in light, real of purpose, ethereal of soul, all-working, all-desiring, all-smelling, all-tasting, grasping this All, speaking naught, heeding naught—this is my Self within my heart, smaller than a rice-corn, or a barley-corn, or a mustard-seed, or a canary-seed, or the pulp of a canary-seed—this is my Self within my heart, greater than earth, greater than sky, greater than heaven, greater than these worlds. All-working, all-desiring, all-smelling, all-tasting, grasping this All, speaking naught, heeding naught—this is my Self within my heart, this is Brahma; to Him shall I win when I go hence. He with whom it is thus has indeed no doubt.
>
> "What is the Self?"
>
> It is the Spirit made of understanding among the Breaths, the inward light within the heart, that walks abroad, abiding the same, through both worlds. He meditates, as it were; He hovers about, as it were. Turned to sleep, He passes beyond this world, the shapes of death.
>
> This Spirit at birth enters into the body, and is blent with evils: at death He passes out, and leaves evils.

§ 2

THE BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES

Unlike Brahmanism, Buddhism can be traced back to the teaching of one man, Gautama. The founder of Buddhism was an Indian, and though Buddhism is an idealised development of Brahmanism, there is only a handful of Buddhists in India to-day. Buddhism is related to Brahmanism somewhat as Christianity is to Judaism, or Protestantism to Roman Catholicism. Four-fifths of the modern Buddhists are Chinese, and large numbers of them are found in Japan, Korea, Tibet, Siam, and Ceylon.

The Early Days of Gautama

Gautama was born in the north of Bengal between 600 and 500 B.C. He belonged to the ruling family of the country. He was rich and good-looking, married to a beautiful wife, and the father of one child, but his life of ease and plenty became insupportable.

When he was twenty-nine, he rode away from his home with one servant. After he had travelled a little way, he sent the servant back with his horse and his sword and changed clothes with a ragged beggar, as St. Francis did generations ago. For a time he lived in a cave with a number of learned men, and then, after a long, lonely struggle, during which he was "the loneliest figure in history battling for life," he collected disciples in the city of Benares and taught them his doctrines. Gautama was one of the splendid figures in world-history—lonely, self-sacrificing, inspired. Gautama's last words were: "Decay is inherent in all component things. Work out therefore your emancipation with diligence." After his death his words were repeated by his disciples, exactly as the words of Christ were repeated by St. Peter and his comrades after the sacrifice on Calvary. It was not till many years after his death that the teachings of Gautama were written down in what are called the Pitakas or Baskets. The Pitakas were written in Pali, the spoken language of the common Indian people, which bears much the same resemblance to Sanscrit as Italian bears to Latin.

The teaching of Gautama has been described shortly by

Mr. H. G. Wells in *The Outline of History.* The following passage summarises the Gospel of Buddha:

> The fundamental teaching of Gautama, as it is now being made plain to us by the study of original sources, is clear and simple and in the closest harmony with modern ideas. It is beyond all dispute the achievement of one of the most penetrating intelligences the world has ever known.

The Gospel of Buddha

> We have what are almost certainly the authentic heads of his discourse to the five disciples which embodies his essential doctrine. All the miseries and discontents of life he traces to insatiable selfishness. Suffering, he teaches, is due to the craving individuality, to the torment of greedy desire. Until a man has overcome every sort of personal craving his life is trouble and his end sorrow. There are three principal forms the craving of life takes, and all are evil. The first is the desire to gratify the senses, sensuousness. The second is the desire for personal immortality. The third is the desire for prosperity, worldliness. All these must be overcome —that is to say, a man must no longer be living for himself —before life can become serene. But when they are indeed overcome and no longer rule a man's life, when the first personal pronoun has vanished from his private thoughts, then he has reached the higher wisdom, Nirvana, serenity of soul. For Nirvana does not mean, as many people wrongly believe, extinction, but the extinction of the futile personal aims that necessarily make life base or pitiful or dreadful.
>
> Now here, surely, we have the completest analysis of the problem of the soul's peace. Every religion that is worth the name, every philosophy, warns us to lose ourselves in something greater than ourselves. "Whosoever would save his life, shall lose it"; there is exactly the same lesson. . . .
>
> In certain other respects this primitive Buddhism differed from any of the religions we have hitherto considered. It was primarily a religion of conduct, not a religion of observances and sacrifices. It had no temples, and since it had

> no sacrifices it had no sacred order of priests. Nor had it any theology. It neither asserted nor denied the reality of the innumerable and often grotesque gods who were worshipped in India at that time. It passed them by.

The Pitakas contain the exposition of the Buddhist doctrine, and they include ghost stories, prose aphorisms, various expositions and regulations for the discipline of Buddha's followers, as well as psalms and hymns.

The following quotations will give some idea of the character of the Pitakas. In the second Pitaka there is a collection of verses called "The Path of Right." The extract is from Rhys David's *Buddhism:*

> For never in this world does hatred cease by hatred;
> Hatred ceases by love; this is always its nature.
>
> When by earnestness he has put an end to vanity,
> And has climbed the terraced heights of wisdom,
> The wise looks down upon the fools;
> Serene he looks upon the toiling crowd,
> As one standing on a hill looks down
> On those who stand upon the plain.
>
> It is good to tame the mind,
> Difficult to hold in, and flighty;
> Rushing where'er it listeth;
> A tamed mind is the bringer of bliss.
>
> As the bee—injuring not
> The flower, its colour, or scent—
> Flies away, taking the nectar;
> So let the wise man dwell upon the earth.
>
> As long as the sin bears no fruit,
> The fool, he thinks it honey;
> But when the sin ripens,
> Then, indeed, he goes down into sorrow.
>
> One may conquer a thousand thousand men in battle,
> But he who conquers himself alone is the greatest victor.

Let no man think lightly of sin, saying in his heart
"It cannot overtake me."
As the waterpot fills by even drops of water falling,
The fool gets full of sin, ever gathering little by little.

Gautama's democracy, his revolt against class distinctions and the prevailing caste system, is expressed in the following:

Not by birth does one become low caste,
Not by birth does one become a Brahmin;
By his actions alone one becomes low caste,
By his actions alone one becomes a Brahmin.

How like this is to John Ball's:

When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?

The study of Gautama's life and teaching do not help much towards the understanding of modern Buddhism, which has become a tangle of varying principles and practice, grafted on to materialistic polytheism. Some idea of the more exalted modern Buddhism can be obtained from Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*.

§ 3

THE BOOKS OF CONFUCIUS

Another great outstanding name which belongs to about the same period as Gautama is that of Confucius. He "takes rank in China as practically the founder of its literature, of its system of morals, and of its religious ideal or standard." He was free, says one of his disciples, from four things: foregone conclusions, arbitrary determinations, obstinacy, and egoism. Mr. George Haven Putnam has tersely summed up the work of Confucius:

> What is known as the religion of Confucius, comprises in substance the old-time national or popular faith freshly

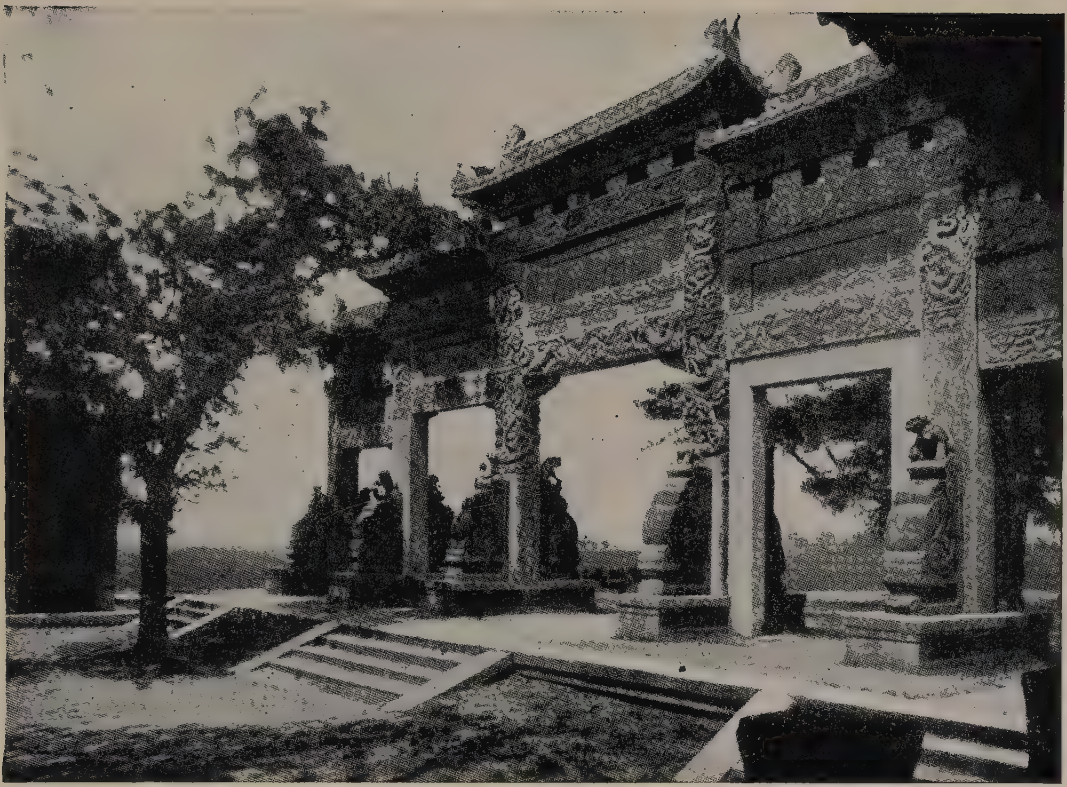
interpreted into the thought and language of the later generation, and shaped into a practical system of morals as a guide for the action of the state and for the daily life of the individual citizen.

It is interesting to compare the different forms taken by the earliest literary traditions of the different peoples of antiquity. The Greek brings to us as the corner-stone of his literature and of his beliefs, the typical epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey;* poems of action and prowess, commemorating the great deeds of the ancestors, and describing the days when men were heroes, and heroes were fit companions and worthy antagonists for the gods themselves.

The imagination of the East Indian has evolved a series of gorgeous and grotesque dreams, in which all conditions of time and space appear to be obliterated, and in which the universe is pictured as it might appear in the visions of the smoker of haschisch. It is difficult to gather from these wild fancies of the earlier Indian poets (and the earlier writers were essentially poets) any trustworthy data concerning the history of the past, or any practical instruction by which to guide the life of the present. The present is but a tiny point, between the immeasurable æons of the past and the *nirvana* of the future, and seems to have been thought hardly worthy the attention of thinking beings.

The Egyptian literary idea has apparently been thought out in the temple, and it is from the priests that the people receive the record of the doings of its gods and of the immeasurable dynasties of monarchs selected by the gods to express their will, while it is also to the priests that the people must look for instruction concerning the duty of the present.

The Assyrian records read, on the other hand, as if they were the work of royal scribes, writing under the direct supervision of the kings themselves. The gods are described, and their varied relations to the world below are duly set forth. But the emphasis of the narrative appears to be given to the glory and the achievements of such great monarchs as Sargon and Asshurbanipal, as if a long line of scribes, writ-



THE BEAUTIFUL MEMORIAL ARCH ("HONOURABLE PORTAL") LEADING TO THE TOMB OF CONFUCIUS

Confucius was buried at his birthplace in the Shantung province, and the temple built to his memory is now a museum of wondrous Chinese art.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

CONFUCIUS, THE CELEBRATED CHINESE PHILOSOPHER
551 B.C.

Confucius remains the great prophet of China. He was statesman and poet as well as philosopher. Confucius taught the Christian "Golden rule," and insisted that knowledge was the way to virtue.

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LAO-TZE

The founder of the Chinese religion of Taoism, Lao-Tze, was born in 604 B.C., fifty-three years before the birth of Confucius. He taught humility, gentleness, and economy, "the three precious possessions." He also taught the doctrine of the transmigration of souls.

ing directly for the king's approval, had continued the chronicles from reign to reign.

The Literary and Religious Ideals of China

The early literary and religious ideals of China took a very different form. We find here no priestly autocracy, controlling all intellectual activities and giving a revelation as to the nature of the universe, the requirements of the gods, and the obligations of men, obligations which have never failed to include the strictest obedience to the behests of the priests, the representatives of the gods. There are no court chronicles, dictated under royal supervision, and devoted, not to the needs of the people, but to the glorious achievements of the monarchs. Nor is there any great epic, commemorating the deeds of heroes and demi-gods. In place of these we find what may be called a practical system of applied ethics. Confucius was evidently neither a visionary dreamer nor a poet, nor did he undertake to establish any priestly or theological authority for his teaching. He gives the impression of having been an exceptionally clear-headed and capable thinker, who devoted himself, somewhat as Socrates did a century later, to studying out the problems affecting the life of the state and of the individual. With Socrates, however, the chief thing appears to have been the intellectual interest of the problem, while with Confucius the controlling purpose was evidently the welfare of his fellowmen. It was his aim, as he himself expressed it, through a rewriting of the wise teachings left us by our ancestors, so as to adapt them to the understanding of the present generation, to guide men to wise and wholesome lives, and to prepare them for a better future. The work of Confucius stands as the foundation stone of the literature, the morals, and the statecraft of China.

In so far as the Chinese are followers of Confucius, they may be said to have no religion, for religion is the recognition of a superhuman control of human affairs, and no such recognition was taught by the great Chinese philosopher, who was born about the year 550 B.C., at the time when the feudal system in China was breaking up in a turmoil of civil strife. Confucius was an apostle of order and an intense believer in the creation of a powerful central authority. His ideal was the Aristocratic Man —what Carlyle would have called a hero and Nietzsche a superman—who should prove his right to power by the greatness of his character. For some time he was the chief minister of the Duke of Lu, endeavouring to enforce morality by means of etiquette, as if, nowadays, a reformer should insist that the first step towards the righteous life is dressing for dinner. After a time the duke preferred dancing-girls to his philosopher-minister, and Confucius was exiled. He spent the best years of life wandering from state to state, teaching wherever he went, and returning home in his old age to collect his wisdom in his books.

The wisdom of Confucius is contained in five books: *The Book of History, The Book of Changes, The Book of Poetry, The Book of Rites,* and *The Annals of Spring and Autumn.* To *The Book of History* Confucius only contributed a preface; to *The Book of Changes* he wrote several appendices; *The Book of Poetry* was compiled by him from ancient sources; and certain of his sayings have been added to *The Book of Rites,* which was in existence long before his time. Confucius himself protested that by *The Annals of Spring and Autumn* "men would know him and condemn him."

Until recent times, the Chinaman anxious to enter the public service was expected to pass an examination in the works of Confucius and in certain others of the Chinese classics—and in nothing else. Some idea of the teaching of Confucius and of the beauty of his writing may be gathered from the following translated passages quoted from Mr. Giles's *The Sayings of Confucius:*

> The master said: The higher type of man makes a sense of duty the groundwork of his character, blends with it in

action a sense of harmonious proportion, manifests it in a spirit of unselfishness, and perfects it by the addition of sincerity and truth. Then indeed is he a noble character.

The higher type of man seeks all that he wants in himself; the inferior man seeks all that he wants from others.

The higher type of man is firm but not quarrelsome; sociable, but not clannish.

The wise man does not esteem a person more highly because of what he says, neither does he undervalue what is said because of the person who says it.

The charm of *The Book of Poetry* is illustrated by the following translation by Mr. Cranmer-Byng:

THE HAPPY MAN

He has perched in the valley with pines over-grown,
This fellow so stout and so merry and free;
He sleeps and he talks and he wanders alone,
And none are so true to their pleasure as he.

He has builded his hut in the bend of the mound,
This fellow so fine with his satisfied air;
He wakes and he sings with no neighbour around,
And whatever betide him his home will be there.

He dwells on a height amid cloudland and rain,
This fellow so grand whom the world blunders by;
He slumbers alone, wakes, and slumbers again,
And his secrets are safe in that valley of Wei.

In China to-day hundreds of thousands of people know all the Confucian books by heart, and even the illiterate cherish the Confucian maxims first taught so many centuries ago.

§ 4

THE BOOK OF ZOROASTER

The Teachings of Zoroaster

Another great Eastern religious teacher was Zoroaster. It is impossible to determine the exact age in which he lived. Some authorities place him as early as 1000 B.C., others contend that he was contemporary with Buddha or Confucius. He taught that in the beginning of things there were two spirits, one standing for light and life, the creator of law, order, and truth; the other standing for darkness and death, the creator of all evil. The two spirits are engaged in eternal combat for the soul of man, and Zoroaster foretold the ultimate triumph of the good spirit. It is said that Zoroaster was the author of twenty books written on twelve thousand cow-hides. Much of his teaching is said to be contained in the Zend-Avesta, the sacred book of the Parsees. It is impossible to determine the exact date at which the present book was compiled, though it probably belongs to the period A.D. 250 to 600.

On the highest point of Malabar Hill, outside the city of Bombay, there are a number of towers, 25 feet in height, on which the Parsees leave the bodies of their dead that they may be eaten by vultures and so may not profane the earth. The religion of the Parsees forbids the burning or burial of the dead. The Parsees are a small people to-day, the only followers of the religion of Zoroaster, who, twelve hundred years ago, were driven out of Persia by the Arabs and settled in India. Centuries ago Zoroasterism had its hundreds of thousands of adherents living on the great plain bounded on the west by the River Tigris, the east by the Indus, on the north by the Caspian Sea, and on the south by the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.

One point of great interest about this book, the Zend-Avesta, is that no other existing document is written in the same language. The Zend-Avesta consists of five parts. The first part is made up of a liturgy of prayers and hymns; the second part is also a liturgy; the third part consists of legends and precepts; the fourth part of songs and invocations; and the fifth of prayers. The character of the Zend-Avesta is illustrated in the following extracts quoted from *The Teachings of Zoroaster*, by Dr. S. A. Kapadia:

With enemies fight with equity. With a friend proceed with the approval of friends. With a malicious man carry on no conflict, and do not molest him in any way whatever. With a greedy man thou shouldst not be a partner, and do not trust him with the leadership. With an ill-famed man form no connection. With an ignorant man thou shouldst not become a confederate and associate. With a foolish man make no dispute. With a drunken man do not walk on the road. From an ill-natured man take no loan. . . . In forming a store of good works thou shouldst be diligent, so that it may come to thy assistance among the spirits.

Thou shouldst not become presumptuous through any happiness of the world; for the happiness of the world is such-like as a cloud that comes on a rainy day, which one does not ward off by any hill. . . .

Thou shouldst not become presumptuous through much treasure and wealth; for in the end it is necessary for thee to leave all. . . .

Thou shouldst not become presumptuous through great connections and race; for in the end thy trust is on thine own deeds.

Thou shouldst not become presumptuous through life; for death comes upon thee at last, and the perishable part falls to the ground.

§ 5

THE KORAN

Mohammed's Mission

Mohammed, one of the most remarkable men in the history of the world, was born in the year A.D. 570. After beginning life as a shepherd's boy, he became the servant of a rich widow, whom he married when he was twenty-five. Like John Bunyan and all other religious mystics, Mohammed began his religious experiences with grievous spiritual doubts and struggles. There were Christian churches in Syria in his days, and many colonies of Jews, and Mohammed must have contrasted their religions with the ignorant superstitions of his own people.

Dr. G. M. Grant has written a dramatic account of the beginning of Mohammed's mission:

> He used to wander about the hills alone, brooding over these things; he shunned the society of men, and solitude became a passion to him. At length came the crisis. He was spending the sacred months at Mount Hira, "a huge barren rock, torn by cleft and hollow ravine, standing out solitary in the full white glare of the desert sun, shadowless, flowerless, without well or rill." Here, in a cave, Mohammed gave himself up to prayer and fasting. Long months or even years of doubt had increased his nervous excitability. He had had, they say, cataleptic fits during his childhood, and was evidently more delicately and finely constituted than those around him. These were the circumstances in which, according to the tradition of the cave, Mohammed heard a voice say "Cry!"
>
> "What shall I cry?" he answered.
>
> "Cry! in the name of thy Lord who created,
> Created man from blood,
> Cry! for thy Lord is the bountifullest,
> Who taught the pen,
> Taught man what he did not know."
>
> Mohammed arose trembling and went to Khadijeh, and told her what he had heard. She believed in him, soothed his terror, and bade him hope for the future. Yet he could not believe in himself. Was he not mad, or possessed by a devil? Were these voices of a truth from God?
>
> Doubting, wondering, hoping, he had fain put an end to a life which had become intolerable in its changings from the heaven of hope to the hell of despair, when again—some time, we know not how long, after—he heard the voice, "Thou art the messenger of God, and I am Gabriel." Then conviction at length seized hold upon him; he was indeed to bring a message of good tidings to the Arabs, the message of God through the angel Gabriel. He went back to Khadijeh,

exhausted in mind and body. "Wrap me, wrap me," he said; and in that position the word came to him:

"O thou who art covered, rise up and warn!
And thy Lord magnify!
And thy garments purify!
And abomination shun!
And grant not favours to gain increase!
And thy Lord await."

Thus it was that the first revelations came to Mohammed.

Mohammed's Flight from Mecca to Medina

Mohammed was forty when he began to preach belief in the one true God, insisting on the doctrine of after-death rewards and punishments. Persecution was Mohammed's fate, as it has been the fate of most religious reformers, and to save his life he had to make a midnight flight from Mecca to Medina. This flight—the Hegira—is regarded by Mohammedans as one of the great events in the prophet's life. An army of ten thousand men was sent from Mecca against him, but Mohammed dug a trench and built a wall and his enemy was unable to prevail against him. This failure marked the beginning of a series of triumphs, and when he died at the age of sixty-two Mohammed was master of all Arabia.

The contents of the Koran, the Mohammedan Bible, were first collected about the year A.D. 635, three years after the death of the prophet. Washington Irving tells us:

> It was shortly after the victory of Khaled over Moseilma that Abu Bekar undertook to gather together from written and all sources the precepts and revelations of the Koran, which hitherto had existed partly in scattered documents and partly in the memories of the disciples and companions of the Prophet. He was greatly urged to this undertaking by Omar, that ardent zealot for the faith. The latter had observed with alarm the number of veteran com-

> panions of the Prophet who had fallen in the battle of Akreba. "In a little while," said he, "all the living testifiers to the faith, who bear the revelations of it in their memories, will have passed away, and with them so many records of the doctrines of Islam." He urged Abu Bekar, therefore, to collect from the surviving disciples all that they remembered; and to gather together from all quarters whatever parts of the Koran existed in writing.

It will be seen that the Koran was compiled very much in the same way as the New Testament, and even more, for it not only inculcates a faith, but it is a textbook of civil law.

The unity of God is the basis of the Mohammedan faith, and it was this doctrine that the prophet and his successors taught to "the Arabs, who worshipped the stars; to the Persians, who acknowledged Ormuz and Ahriman; the Indians, who worshipped idols; and the Turks, who had no particular worship." At the present time, the number of people in the world to whom the Koran is the sacred book and Mohammed the supreme teacher is rather larger than the number of adherents of the Roman Catholic Church. Sixty-two and a half million Mohammedans live in the Indian Empire.

What the Koran Teaches

The Koran teaches faith in God—"There is no God but Allah"—faith in His angels, faith in His Scriptures or Koran, faith in His Prophets, predestination, resurrection and judgment after death. To the Moslem, Mohammed is the instrument "whereby the will of the creator of the world has been revealed." The Moslem absolutely believes in the verbal inspiration in the Koran. To him it is an infallible guide to conduct, and he neither questions its facts or its precepts. Hell is elaborately described in the Koran. There are seven circles in hell. One of them is for wicked Mohammedans, who are released after a certain period of punishment. Another is for Jews, a third for Christians, and the

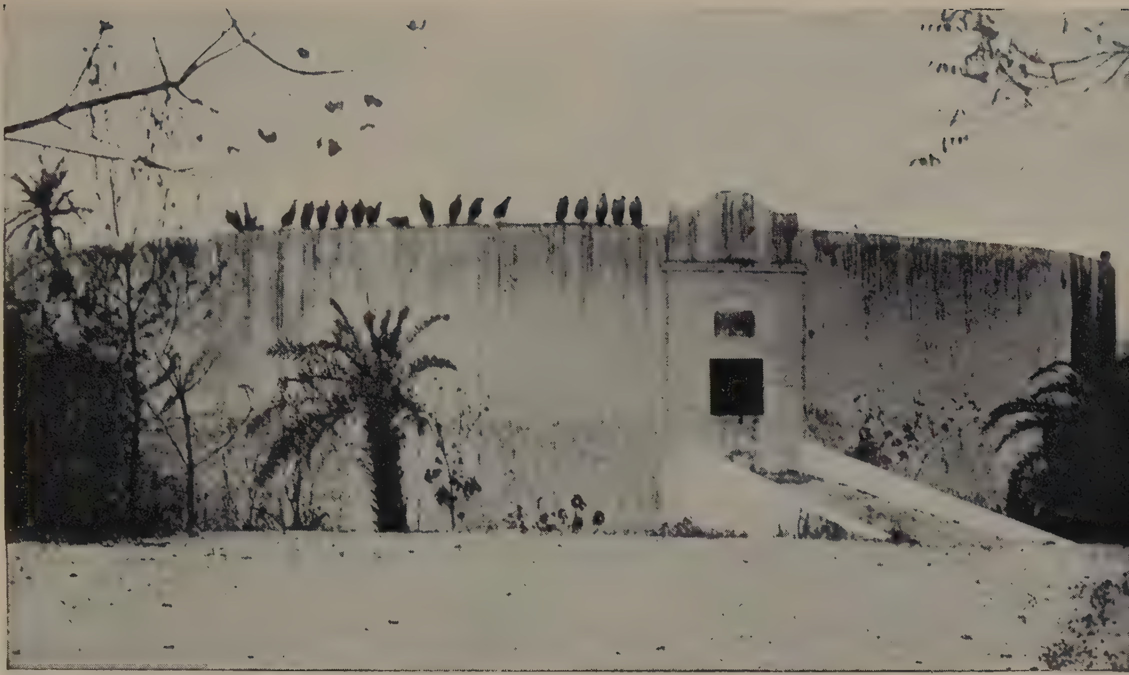
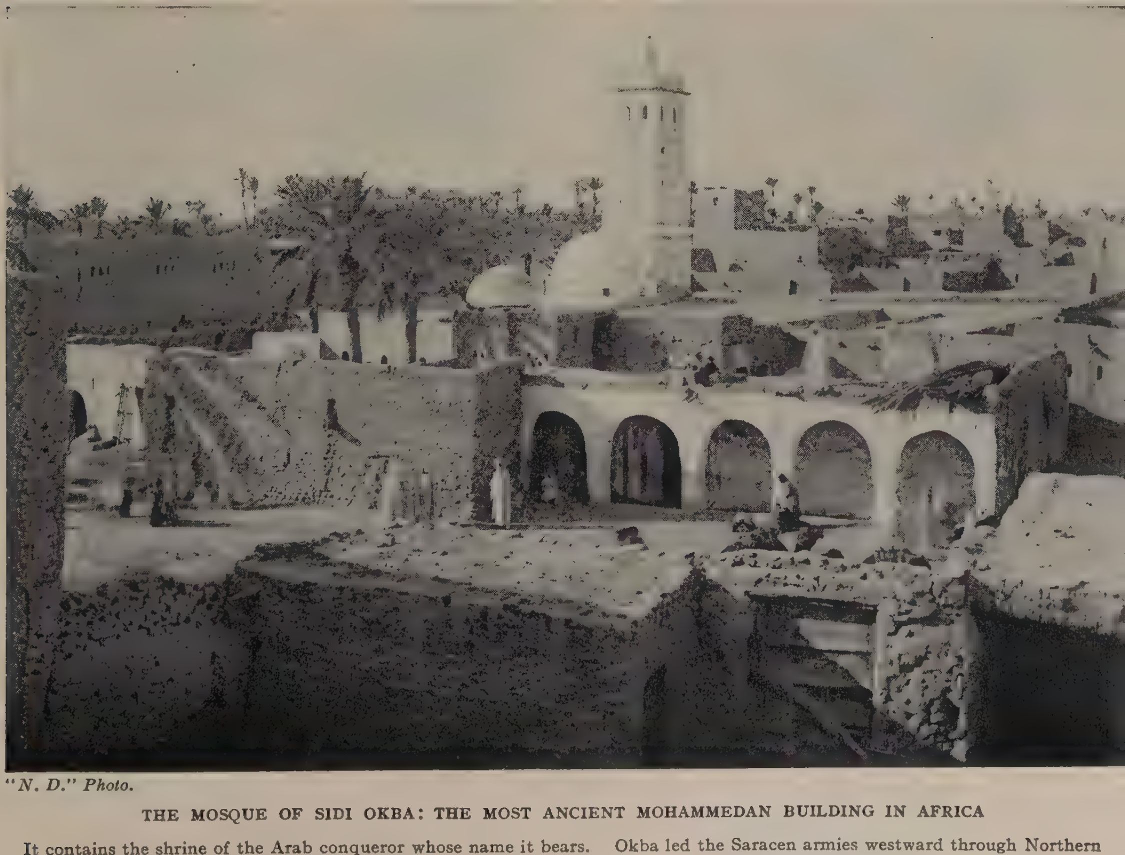


Photo: H. J. Shepstone.

A PARSEE TOWER OF SILENCE, BOMBAY

The Parsees, a small people of Persian origin, are followers of Zoroaster. They are rarely found nowadays outside the city of Bombay. The reason for the existence of the Towers of Silence is found in the teachings of Zoroaster. His laws for the treatment of dead bodies direct that as they are impure they must not be buried, or they would pollute the earth; that they must not be burnt or they would pollute fire; neither must they be thrown into water of any kind. It is directed that they must be carried up to a lofty tower or mountain, placed on stones or iron plates, and exposed to dogs and vultures.



"N. D." Photo.

THE MOSQUE OF SIDI OKBA: THE MOST ANCIENT MOHAMMEDAN BUILDING IN AFRICA

It contains the shrine of the Arab conqueror whose name it bears. Okba led the Saracen armies westward through Northern Africa to the shores of the Atlantic in A.D. 670, destroying the last vestiges of Greek and Roman civilisation in Africa.

Photo: H. J. Shepstone

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF MECCA, THE RELIGIOUS CAPITAL OF ISLAM

Meçca was the birthplace of Mohammed, and the city of his followers. It lies in a narrow valley, and its great Mosque holds 30,000 worshippers.

worst hell of all for hypocrites. The heaven of the Koran is thus summarised by Sir Arthur Wollaston:

> It is pictured as beautiful beyond the dreams of imagination, and all that can delight the heart or enchant the senses is there to be found—exquisite jewels and precious stones, the tree of happiness, yielding fruits of size and taste unknown to mortals, streams flowing, some with water, some with milk, some with wine (which, forbidden in this life, is permitted in the next), albeit without any intoxicating properties, and others with honey. But all these glories will be eclipsed by the resplendent houris of paradise; created not of clay, as in the case of mortal women, but of pure musk, and clad in magnificent garments, their charms being enhanced by the enjoyment of perpetual youth. Entertained with the ravishing songs of the Angel Israfil the inhabitants of paradise will enjoy pleasures that surpass all human imagination. Let it not be supposed, however, that the happiness of the blessed is to consist wholly in corporeal enjoyments; far otherwise, for all the varied pleasures of paradise will pale into insignificance compared with the exquisite delight of beholding the face of the Almighty morning and evening. The idea that women will not be admitted into paradise is a libel upon Islam, though admittedly differences of opinion exist as to whether or not they will pass into a separate place of happiness. Nor is it anywhere explained whether male companions will be assigned to them. One comfort, however, remains to the fair sex in that on entering paradise they are all to become young again.

The Koran teaches belief in the existence of genii as well as of angels. The character of these genii may be gathered from the stories of the *Arabian Nights.* It commands the faithful to pray five times a day at certain definite times. It commands the giving of alms, fasting ("the odour of the mouth of him who fasteth is more grateful to God than that of musk"), and a pilgrimage to Mecca. The Koran forbids the drinking of wine, gambling, usury, and the eating of certain kinds of flesh. The Koran allows polygamy and makes divorce easy. And it commands the faithful to proselytise, by persuasion and by the sword.

The word Koran means "that which ought to be read." It is divided into a hundred and fourteen chapters, each chapter being subdivided into verses. There are seven ancient editions of the Koran. Two were published at Medina, one at Mecca, one at Cufa, one at Basra, and one in Syria. The seventh is called the common or vulgar edition. Each edition is said to contain 77,639 words and 323,015 letters. Each chapter, except the ninth, is prefixed by the words: "In the name of the most merciful God." The Koran is written in prose in the purest Arabic, though Sale tells us that the sentences generally continued in a long continued rhyme, for the sake of which the sense is often interrupted. There is little doubt that Mohammed himself was the actual author of the Koran. Mohammedans, however, believe that the first transcript has been from everlasting by God's throne, written on a table of vast bigness called the preserved table, in which are also recorded the divine decrees, past and future. A copy from this table, in one volume on paper, was by the ministry of the angel Gabriel sent down to the lowest heaven, whence Gabriel revealed it to Mohammed by parcels, some at Mecca and some at Medina, at different times during the space of twenty-three years.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Koran was translated into Latin and French, and one of the French versions was translated into English in 1649. George Sale's famous English translation was first published in the year 1734.

The following quotations show the Koran's teaching concerning the nature of God:

> To God belongeth the east and the west; therefore, whithersoever ye turn yourselves to pray, there is the face

of God; for God is omnipresent and omniscient. To Him belongeth whatever is in heaven and on earth; all is possessed by Him, the Creator of heaven and earth; and when He decreeth a thing He only saith unto it, Be, and it is.

O true believers, beg assistance with patience and prayer, for God is with the patient.

God is bounteous and wise. He giveth wisdom unto whom He pleaseth; and he unto whom wisdom is given, hath received much good; but none will consider, except the wise of heart. And whatever alms ye shall give, or whatever vow ye shall vow, verily God knoweth it; but the ungodly shall have none to help them. If ye make your alms to appear, it is well; but if ye conceal them, and give them unto the poor, this will be better for you, and will atone for your sins: and God is well informed of that which ye do.

Much of the Koran may be traced to the Bible, and although the Mohammedan has fought fiercely against the Christian the Koran teaches that Jesus Christ, with Abraham and Moses, should be held in the highest reverence as an inspired prophet.

§ 6

THE TALMUD

Other Sacred Books are the *Granth of the Sikhs*, the *Tao Teh King* of the Chinese philosopher Lao-tze, who preached the Sermon on the Mount six centuries before Christ, and the Talmud.

The importance of the Talmud lies in the fact that it is the authoritative guide of the great mass of the Jewish people living to-day in the various cities of the Western world. Professor Polano says: "The Talmud is a collection of early Biblical discussions, with the comments of generations of teachers who devoted their lives to the study of the scriptures. It is an encyclopædia of law, civil and penal, human and divine. It is more, however, than a mere book of laws. It records the thoughts, rather than the events, of a thousand years of the national life of the Jewish People; all their oral traditions, carefully gathered and preserved with a love devout in its trust and simplicity."

To the devout Jew there is an intimate connection between the ethical and ceremonial sides of religion, and this fact gives the Talmud its interest and importance.

The Talmud took over three hundred years to compile. The work was begun at the beginning of the fourth century A.D., and not finished until the end of the sixth. The Talmud is divided into two parts. The first part is called the Mishna and is a collection of legal decisions based on the laws of the Old Testament. The second part of the Talmud is called the Gemara. The Mishna was written in what Mr. Stanley Cook calls "a late literary form of Hebrew." The Gemara was written in Aramaic, the language in which a great part of our New Testament was originally written.

The following is a typical Talmudic parable:

> It happened that the mayor of a city once sent his servant to the market to purchase some fish. When he reached the place of sale he found that all the fish save one had been sold, and this one a Jewish tailor was about purchasing. Said the mayor's servant, "I will give one gold piece for it"; said the tailor, "I will give two." The mayor's messenger then expressed his willingness to pay three gold pieces for it, but the tailor claimed the fish, and said he would not lose it though he should be obliged to pay ten gold pieces for it. The mayor's servant then returned home, and in anger related the circumstance to his master. The mayor sent for his subject, and when the latter appeared before him asked:
>
> "What is thy occupation?"
>
> "A tailor, sir," replied the man.
>
> "Then how canst thou afford to pay so great a price for a fish, and how dare degrade my dignity by offering for it a larger sum than that offered by my servant?"

"I fast to-morrow," replied the tailor, "and I wished the fish to eat to-day, that I might have strength to do so. I would not have lost it even for ten pieces of gold."

"What is to-morrow more than any other day?" asked the mayor.

"Why art thou more than any other man?" returned the other.

"Because the king hath appointed me to this office."

"Well," replied the tailor, "the King of kings hath appointed this day to be holier than all other days, for on this day we hope that God will pardon our transgressions."

"If this be the case thou wert right," answered the mayor, and the Israelite departed in peace.

Thus, if a person's intention is to obey God, nothing can hinder its accomplishment. On this day God commanded His children to fast, but they must strengthen their bodies to obey Him by eating the day before. It is a person's duty to sanctify himself, bodily and spiritually, for the approach of this great day. He should be ready to enter at any moment into the Fearful Presence with repentance and good deeds as his companions.

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VI

GREEK MYTH AND THE POETS

GREEK MYTH AND THE POETS

IN an earlier chapter something has been said about the place of the Myth in the ancestry of Literature. The nature of myths was explained. Why (it may be asked) return to the subject? It is necessary to return to it because mythology, like a parent's blood, has passed into all the veins of Literature, of which it is still one of the sweetest and most persisting currents. What the alphabet is to words, and what words are to vocal or written expression of thought—such is mythology to poetry.

§ 1

Words and Phrases

We are more Greek than we know. Thousands of our most subtle and beautiful words are Greek. Thus no word of a high order is heard more frequently to-day than "psychological"; yet unless, at the back of the mind, one remembers that the word is compounded of the Greek *psyche* (the soul) and *logikos* (appertaining to speaking or reasoning), a true understanding of the word, which will avail one in all its uses and appearances, is not possible; any more than the word "philosophy" can be fully sensed unless one knows that it is simply the Greek *philo* (I love) joined to *sophia* (wisdom): hence, in its essence, the love of wisdom. Even the telephone is less wonderful to a man to whom it does not recall *tele* (far off) and *phone* (sound). This is not to tax the ordinary man with ignorance of Greek; if he does not know these things it is because the curricula of his schooldays did not include a simple and short study of Greek *roots.*

You read a leading article which discusses the reform of some system, and it demands *the cleansing of the Augean stable.* The phrase may have become so familiar in like connections that you vaguely understand that it refers to a summary turn-out of bad methods or corrupt officials; but its full significance is lost if one does not know that what is now a common phrase is an allusion to the fifth Labour of Hercules, who, at the instigation of Juno, was compelled to undertake twelve colossal tasks, of which the fifth was to clean out the stables, or byres, of Augeas, king of Elis, where three thousand oxen had been untended for thirty years.

So deeply have these names and stories of the dawn of culture infused themselves in our speech that even the least educated refer to them unknowingly. When the two weary Bath chairmen brought Mrs. Dowler from a party at three o'clock in the morning, they were unable to make anyone in Mr. Dowler's and Mr. Pickwick's lodgings hear their prolonged knockings. " 'Servants in the arms o' Porpus, I think," said the short chairman, warming his hands at the attendant link-boy's torch." This is true to life. The illiterate old chairman did not know that he was expressing his impatience by a perverted allusion to Morpheus the bringer of dreams, the son and servant of Somnus, the deity who presided over Sleep. Yet he referred to Morpheus as directly (and, indeed, as correctly) as does Milton in "Il Penseroso," where he compares the "vain deluding Joys" of life to

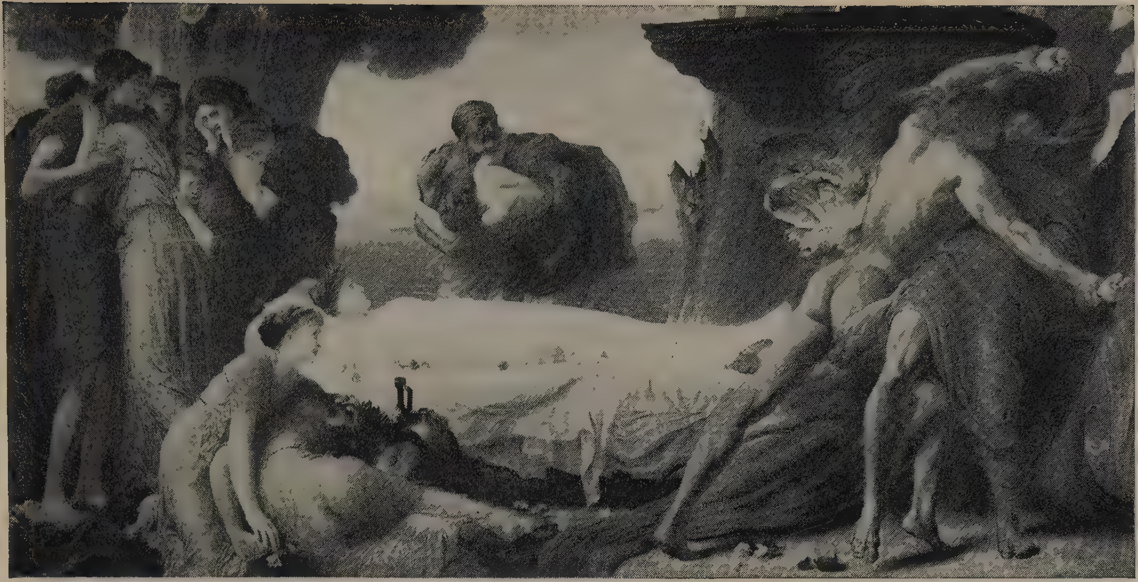
> . . . the gay motes that people the sun-beams,
> Or likest hovering dreams,
> The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.

§ 2

THE GREAT GOD PAN

Mercury's Son

In recent years the name of no Greek deity has been more on the lips than Pan. The beautiful statue of Peter Pan in



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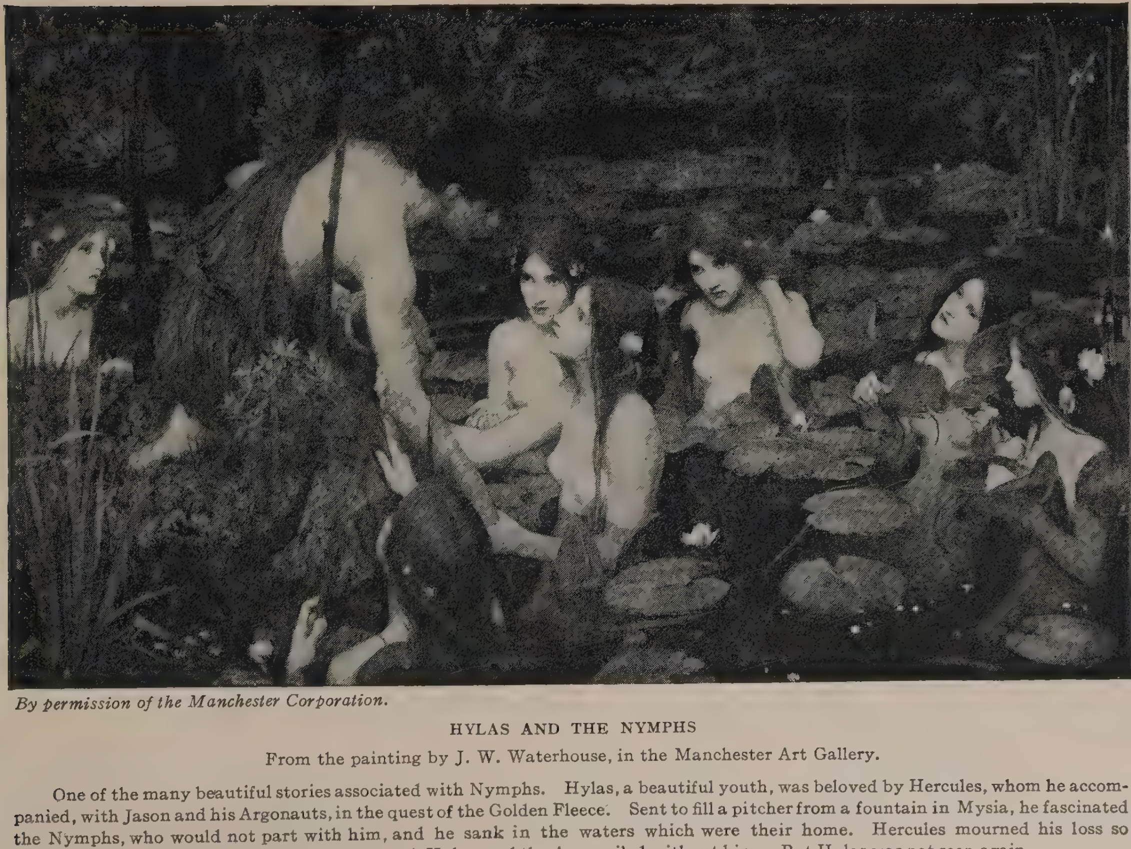
"HERCULES WRESTLING WITH DEATH FOR THE BODY OF ALCESTIS," BY LORD LEIGHTON

Admetus, King of Thessaly, loved Alcestis, daughter of Pelias. After his marriage he fell ill, but the Fates, who had decreed his death, were prevailed upon by Apollo to spare his life on condition that someone would die in his stead. Only his wife, Alcestis, would make the sacrifice. She sickened in secret while Admetus recovered. But Hercules, arriving at the fatal hour, seized Death, and forced him to release his prey. Hence Milton's lines in his "Sonnet on his Deceased Wife":

"Methought I saw my late-espoused saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from death by force, though pale and faint."



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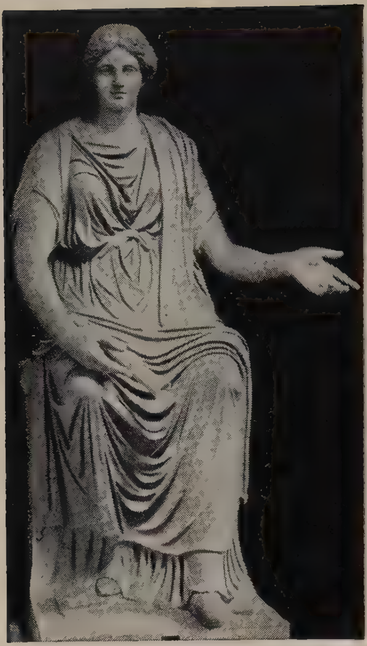
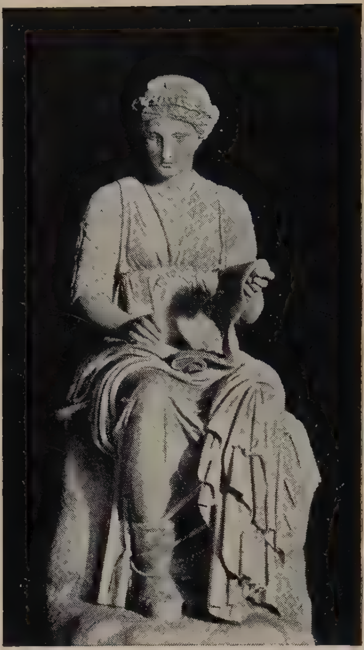
HYLAS AND THE NYMPHS

From the painting by J. W. Waterhouse, in the Manchester Art Gallery.

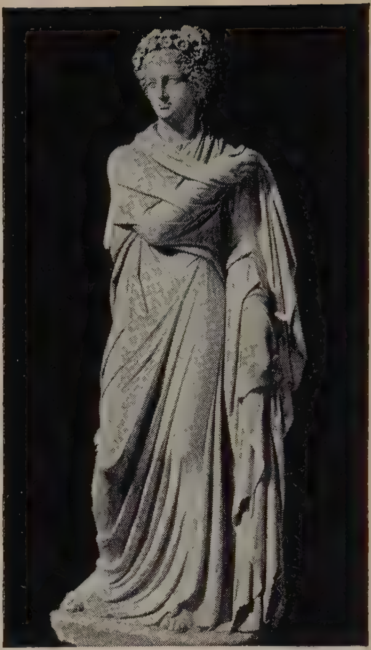
One of the many beautiful stories associated with Nymphs. Hylas, a beautiful youth, was beloved by Hercules, whom he accompanied, with Jason and his Argonauts, in the quest of the Golden Fleece. Sent to fill a pitcher from a fountain in Mysia, he fascinated the Nymphs, who would not part with him, and he sank in the waters which were their home. Hercules mourned his loss so greatly that he abandoned the Argonauts to seek Hylas, and the Argo sailed without him. But Hylas was not seen again.



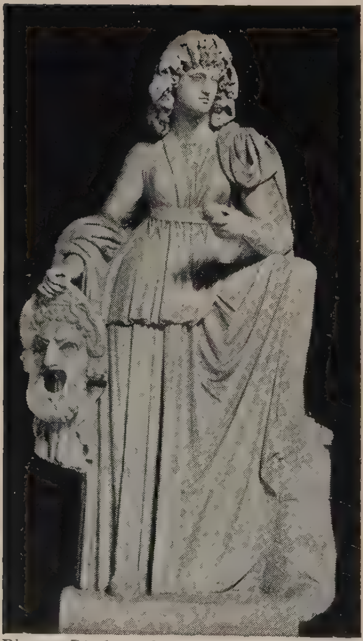
THE MUSE EUTERPE
(Vatican.)
Muse of Lyric Poetry.



CLIO
(Vatican.)
Muse of History.

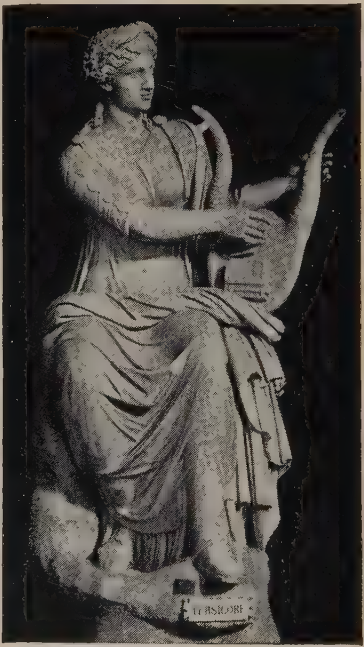


POLHYMNIA
(Vatican.)
Muse of Sacred Poetry.

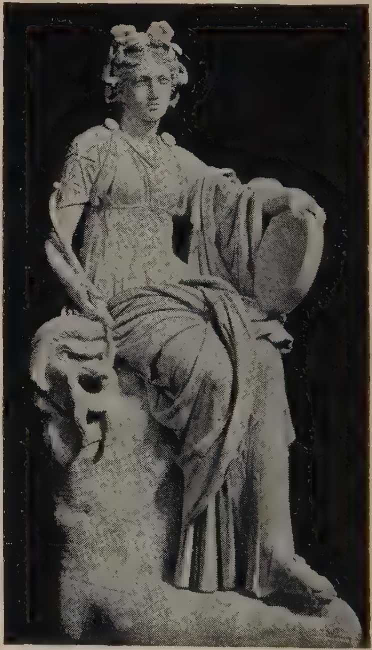


Photos: Rischgitz Collection.

MELPOMENE
(Vatican.)
Muse of Tragedy.



TERPSICHORE
(Vatican.)
Muse of Choral Song and Dance.



THALIA
(Vatican.)
Muse of Comedy and Idyllic Poetry.

The Nine Muses, of whom six are represented here, were goddesses who presided over the liberal arts. Daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne (Memory), they dwelt on the summits of Parnassus, Pindus, or Helicon, whose streams and springs were sacred to them, as were also the palm-tree and the laurel. Apollo was their patron and leader. Poets in all ages have invoked the aid of the Muses. The three not here represented are Calliope, who presided over epic poetry, Erato (love poetry), and Urania (astronomy).

Kensington Gardens is a tribute not only to Sir James Barrie's exquisite creation, but to that god of the woods and fields who inspired it. Pan, the son of Mercury and a wood-nymph, has a great place in poetry. His name signifies "all"; hence a temple dedicated to all the gods was called a Pantheon, and a church in which honour is rendered to the famous dead, such as Westminster Abbey, is often called by the same name. Pan himself was a wild and wandering creature of the woods and mountains.

He was goat-footed and horned, flat-nosed and tailed, yet he played wild sweet tunes on his pipes; and thus he figures as a satyr who pursues the Nymphs and Dryads with unholy love—and also as the spirit of the joy of living the life of nature. Milton writes of

> Universal Pan,
> Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
> Led on the eternal Spring.

But Pan was also the dread of all who wandered through a trackless forest or near a gloomy cave. Sudden and unreasonable fear would seize them at the thought of Pan's presence. Hence our word "panic." It is a singular thought that a panic on the Stock Exchange recalls the eerie terrors of darkness felt by Arcadian peasants in ages remoter than any of which history tells.

§ 3

CUPID AND PSYCHE

The allusions to Greek myths, heard on the common tongue, are endless. Cupid's name is as familiar to-day as when the infant god of love was known to all men as the winged son of Venus by Jupiter, though other fathers—Mars and Mercury—are named. Cupid's name is also Eros; from the one we have our word "cupidity," and from the other "erotic." The story of the estrangement and reconciliation of Cupid and Psyche, one of the most beautiful of the myths, has been referred to in an earlier chapter. It may be regarded as a primitive allegory of the conditions under which men can find immortality.

Psyche's name signifies "a butterfly"—the emblem of the soul's life breaking from mortal bonds. Keats's beautiful "Ode to Psyche" will be recalled. It concludes thus:

> Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
>   In some untrodden region of my mind,
> Where branched thoughts, new-grown with pleasant pain,
>   Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:
> Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
>   Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep;
> And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
>   The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep;
> And in the midst of this wide quietness
> A rosy sanctuary will I dress
> With the wreath's trellis of a working brain,
> With birds, and bells, and stars without a name;
> With all the gardener's fancy e'er could feign,
> Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same;
> And there shall be for thee all soft delight
>   That shadowy thought can win,
> A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
>   To let the warm Love in!

The literature of Cupid is the literature of love. Shakespeare brings him into his plays no fewer than fifty-two times, never more beautifully than in *The Midsummer Night's Dream.* Oberon speaks to Puck:

> That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
> Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
> Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
> At a fair vestal thronéd by the west,
> And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
> As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
> But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft

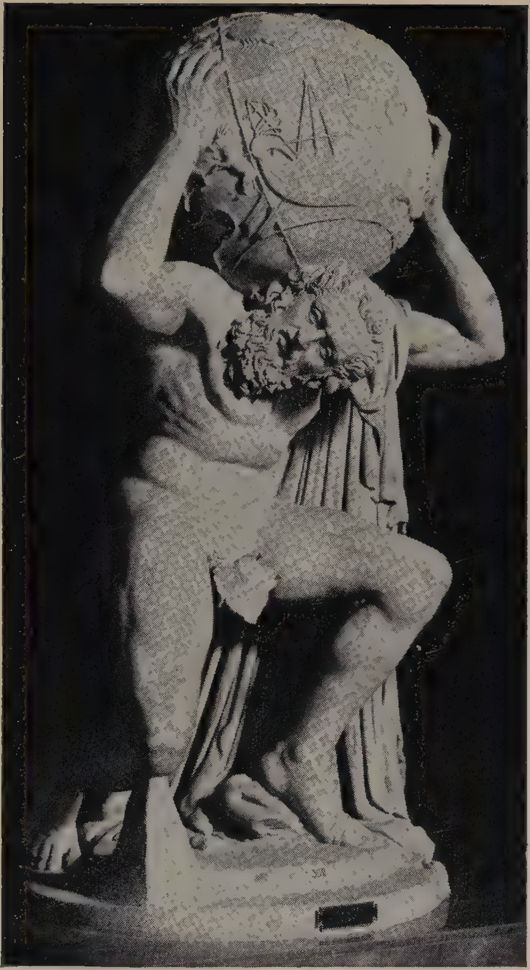


Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

ATLAS

National Museum, Naples.

Shown the Medusa's head by Perseus, the Titan, Atlas, suffered the fate of being turned into a mountain of stone. Hence, Mount Atlas, named after him, was supposed to bear the weight of heaven, but the Titan was also imagined as supporting the earth on his shoulders.

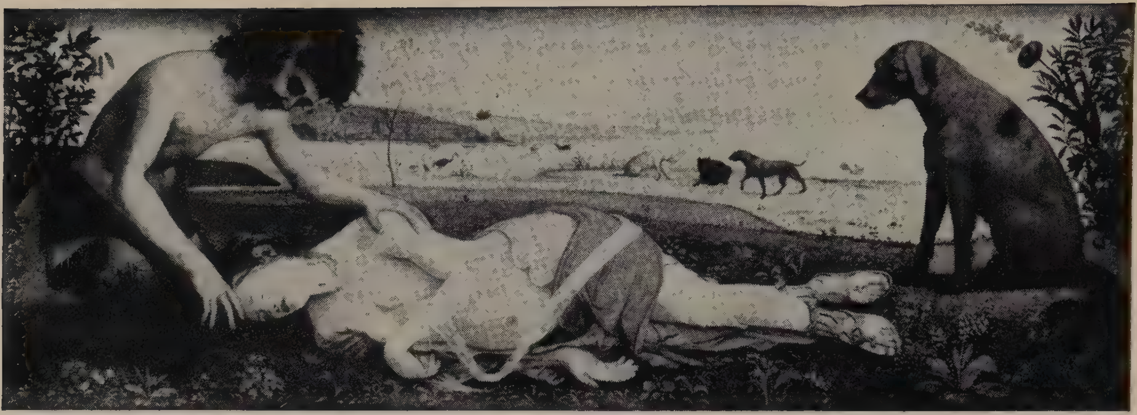


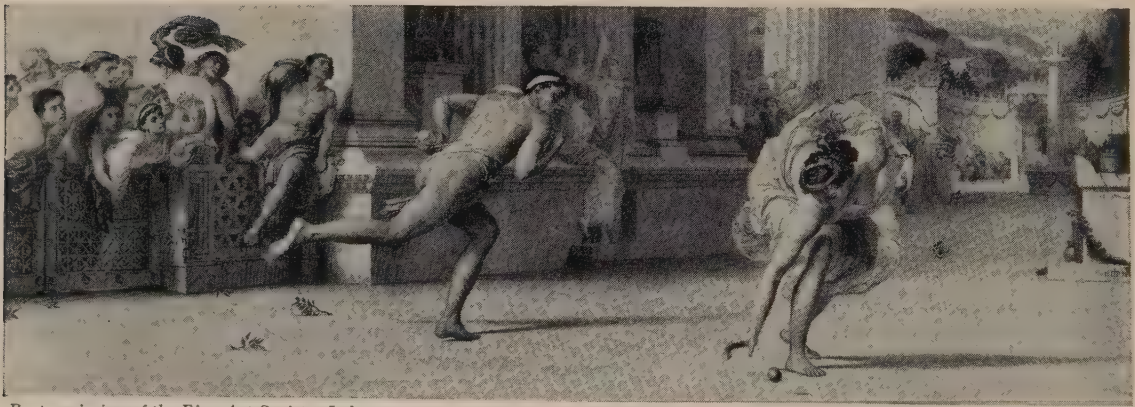
Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

DEATH OF PROCRIS, BY PIERO DI COSIMO

National Gallery, London.

Cephalus, a great hunter, was wont in the heat of the day to lie in the shade and call upon Aura, "sweet goddess of the breeze," to cool his limbs. His young wife, Procris, was misled into believing that he called upon a rival maiden, and stole to the spot to listen. He thought he heard a sound in a near thicket and, thinking it came from an animal, threw his javelin, which had been the gift of Procris. Too late, he discovered that he had slain his beloved. The story is alluded to in *A Midsummer Night's Dream:*

Pyramus: "Not Cephalus to Procris was so true."
Thisbe: "As Cephalus to Procris, I to you."



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"ATALANTA'S RACE," BY SIR E. J. POYNTER

Atalanta, daughter of Schœneus, King of Scyros, was born in Arcadia, and she had so many suitors that, to settle their claims, she proposed a race in which the lover who arrived at the goal before her should win her hand, but death was to be the penalty of all who tried and failed. Many paid it, but Hippomenes, a beautiful youth, was provided by Venus with three golden apples, which he dropped one by one as he ran. Atalanta, stooping to pick them up, was outrun and became his prize. An oracle, however, had predicted misfortune to Atalanta if she ever married, and soon afterwards Venus, withdrawing her favour, changed the couple into a lion and lioness.

Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.

No better example could be found of the transfusion of an ancient story into fine poetry thousands of years after that story was a wisp of fable in the morning of time.

The reason why these and countless other myths have survived till our day, aiding and beautifying expression, is not merely that poets and painters and scholars have loved them; it is primarily their own everlastingness. They typify human experiences which do not, and cannot, change in essentials; there is no need to go on inventing symbols which, being new, would have little of the beauty of these childlike fancies, and none of their immemorial suggestion. Myth binds the ages together. It may be described as the ozone of literature and art.

It is curious to note how instinctively we resort to fable when new things have to be named or new subjects discussed. In recent years, for example, man has acquired the power of mechanical flight. But his efforts to solve the problem have been beset with peril and tragedy. Hence we now constantly hear allusions to the story of Icarus, just as in an earlier period within our own memory similar allusions to Phaeton were frequent in books and newspapers.

§ 4

THE ROAD TO RUIN

The Chariot of the Sun

Phaeton's story has a tragic splendour, for its background is the universe itself. He was the son of Apollo (or Phœbus), the god of the Sun, and the nymph Clymene. He has represented the rash charioteer, or driver, in all ages. And so, when Shakespeare wishes to express Juliet's impatience for the dusk in which she hopes that Romeo will come to her, he makes her exclaim:

> Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
> Toward Phœbus' lodging: such a waggoner
> As Phaethon would whip you to the west,
> And bring in cloudy night immediately.

But, in the story, Phaeton brought much more than darkness on the earth. He begged Apollo to give him proof of his fatherly trust, and Apollo swore by Styx that he would deny him none that he asked. But he repented of his promise when Phaeton begged to be allowed to drive the chariot of the Sun for a single day. "None but myself," he said, "may drive the flaming car of day; not even Jupiter, whose terrible right arm hurls the thunderbolts." He warned his son of the cosmic perils of the journey.

> The first part of the way is steep . . . the middle is high up in the heavens, whence I myself can scarcely, without alarm, look down and behold the earth I see stretched beneath me. . . . Add to all this, the heaven is all the time turning round and carrying the stars with it. I have to be perpetually on my guard lest that movement, which sweeps everything else along, should hurry me also away. Suppose I lend you the chariot, what will you do? . . . The road is through the midst of frightful monsters. You pass by the horns of the Bull, in front of the Archer, and near the Lion's jaws, and where the Scorpion stretches its arms in one direction and the Crab in another. Nor will you find it easy to guide these horses, with their breasts full of fire which they breathe forth from their mouths and nostrils.

The foolhardy Phaeton held his father to his pledge, and was soon seated in the glorious chariot which Vulcan had made with axle and wheels of gold, spokes of silver, and a seat gemmed with diamonds and chrysolite. He took the reins and started on his journey over the earth. He was soon in difficulties. The steeds felt a lighter hand, and rushed headlong from the road. Disaster on disaster followed. The Great and Little Bear were scorched. Other constellations withered. When he neared the earth there was terror below and above. Phaeton had dropped the reins, and was on his knees praying to his father to help. But his prayer was lost in the great cry of dismay from the nations. Forests were aflame, mountains melted, the sea dried up, and mountains beneath it rose into islands. The earth was cracking: cities went up in smoke and fell in ashes. The Nile fled into the desert, where for the greater part of the year it remains to-day. The people of Ethiopia turned black. Neptune himself could not raise his head above the waves he ruled. Earth prayed in her agony to Jupiter to stay the conflagration that would reduce all her life to cinders.

Jupiter heard, and calling all the gods to witness the salvation he intended, hurled a lightning-bolt at the mad charioteer. He was unseated and fell headlong into the River Eridanus, whose nymphs buried him by its waters and raised a tomb to the rash demigod. His sisters mourned him so helplessly and long that Jupiter, in pity, changed them into poplars whose leaves dripped tears of amber on the fatal stream. His friend, Cygnus, wasted away, and him the gods transformed into a swan which for ever haunted the place where Phaeton disappeared. Thus the primitive mind of man, so weak to explain, so quick to imagine, accounted for desert and drouth and the parched places of the world.

Briefer, but even more applicable now, is the story of Icarus, the son of Daedalus, the Athenian inventor, who had so offended King Minos of Crete that to save himself and his son he made wings for both so that they could fly to safety. Daedalus was skilful, and landed at Cumae, where he built a temple to Apollo. But Icarus flew so near the sun that the wax by which his wings were fastened melted and he fell into a part of the Ægean Sea, which was thenceforth named Icarian. Thus is it that in the twentieth century A.D. the end of Phaeton warns all drivers and that of Icarus all aviators, while both condemn a too soaring ambition such as any man may indulge to his hurt.

§5

STORIES OF THE STARS

The permanence of the Greek myths is secured not only by their part in everyday speech and in literature, but by the fact that a great many of them are recorded in the sky above us, that is to say, in the changeless names of planets, stars, and constellations. God asked Job out of the whirlwind:

> Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?
> Or loose the bands of Orion?

On any starlight night you may see these constellations, the one "like a swarm of fireflies tangled in a silver braid," the other majestic, and, in the spring, "sloping slowly to the west." These are closely related in a myth. The Pleiads were daughters of Atlas, one of the thirteen Titans named by Hesiod, who in their assault on Olympus were cast by Jupiter into the most abysmal pit of Hades—Tartarus. The Pleiads were pursued by the giant, Orion, as they still are, in seeming, in the night-sky of England. In answer to their prayer for succour Jupiter first turned them into pigeons, then into stars. Of these only six can be seen with the eye, and the story is that the seventh, Electra, quitted her place that she might not see the ruin of Troy, which her son, by Jupiter himself, had founded. Hence Byron's line, "Like the lost Pleiad, seen no more below." Milton, recalling the passage in Job, and describing the creation of the firmament and all the heavenly bodies, tells how—

> The grey
> Dawn and the Pleiades before Him danced,
> Shedding sweet influence.

Photo. Braun.

"ICARUS," BY LORD LEIGHTON

The young son of Dædalus, an Athenian sculptor and inventor, Icarus was taught by his father to fly by means of wings fastened by wax to his shoulders. The myth tells how he flew too near the sun and, the wax melting, he fell into the sea and was drowned.

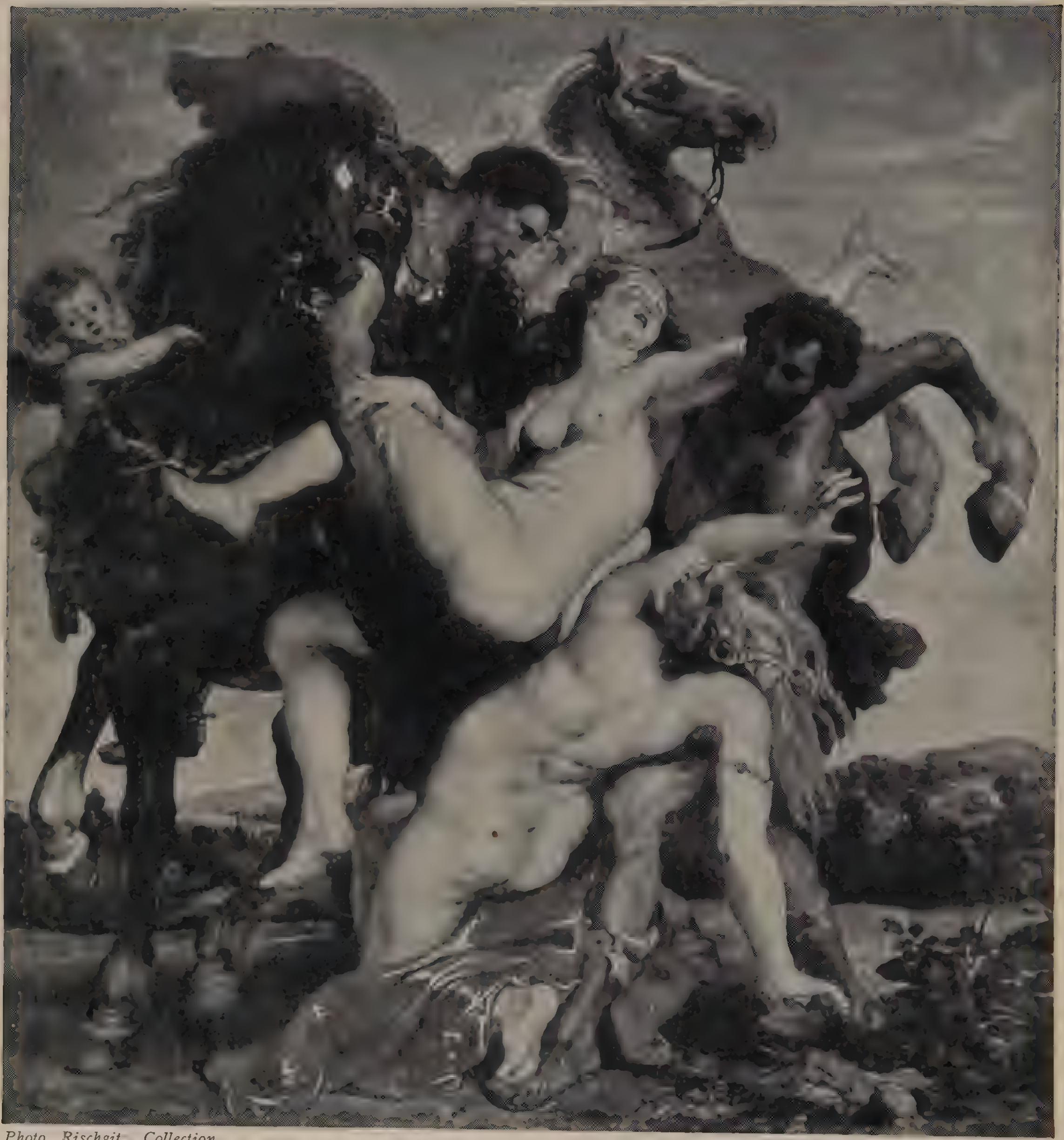


Photo. Rischgit Collection.

"CASTOR AND POLLUX CARRYING OFF TALAIRA AND PHŒBE, DAUGHTERS OF LEUCIPPUS," BY RUBENS

Munich.

Castor and Pollux, who give their names to one of the best-known constellations of stars, were the twin sons of Jupiter by Leda. They accompanied Jason in his quest of the Golden Fleece. The story here illustrated is that of their violent carrying-off of two daughters of Leucippus whose marriages they had been invited to attend. In Macaulay's fine lay, "The Battle of Lake Regillus," Castor and Pollux figure as "The Great Twin Brethren," who fought for Rome.

Orion, the belted hunter, who still threatens the daughters of Atlas, was a son of Neptune. The great goddess Diana (or Artemis) learned to love Orion while he joined her in the chase. She is said to have shot him with an arrow, when his head, just appearing above the sea, was guilefully pointed out to her by Apollo as a target on which to test her skill! When she knew what she had done, she sorrowfully set him in the skies.

Perseus and Andromeda

It often happens that a sequence of stories is recalled by constellations that are near to each other in the heavens. Everyone can pick out the Cassiopea group, in form like an irregular capital W. Cassiopea was the wife of Cepheus, king of Ethiopia. She imprudently proclaimed that she was more beautiful than any of the fifty sea-nymphs, the Nereides, who in their wrath begged Neptune to avenge them. The sea-god sent a terrible monster to ravage the coast, whereupon the Ethiopians sought help from the oracle of Jupiter Ammon in the Libyan desert, and were told that the gods would be appeased if Cepheus exposed his daughter, Andromeda, to the monster. Heart-broken by this demand, Cepheus at last allowed his beloved child to be chained to a rock washed by the sea. Here she was found by Perseus, who, in his winged wanderings, had already slain the terrible Medusa, or Gorgon, on whose serpent locks none could look without turning into stone. He arrived just as the monster was clearing the waves to devour his lovely prey, and, flying down on its back, plunged his sword between its scales and thus destroyed the destroyer. Another version is that he showed the Gorgon's head to the monster, which changed slowly into a rock and, as such, remained for ever to mark the scene. Perseus married Andromeda, and the constellations that bear their names now repeat the story—as do those of Cepheus and Cassiopea. Many minor deities or heroes or persecuted nymphs were thus removed from earth to sky.

The story of Ariadne is different. Deserted by Theseus on an island which was the haunt of Bacchus, she was found there by the wine-god as he was returning with all his train from a hunt. The story has been told best by Catullus in poetry, and by Titian in his masterpiece, "Bacchus and Ariadne," in the National Gallery.

> Bounding along is blooming Bacchus seen,
> With all his heart aflame with love of thee,
> Ariadne! and behind him, see,
> Where Satyrs and Sileni whirl along,
> With frenzy fired, a fierce tumultuous throng.

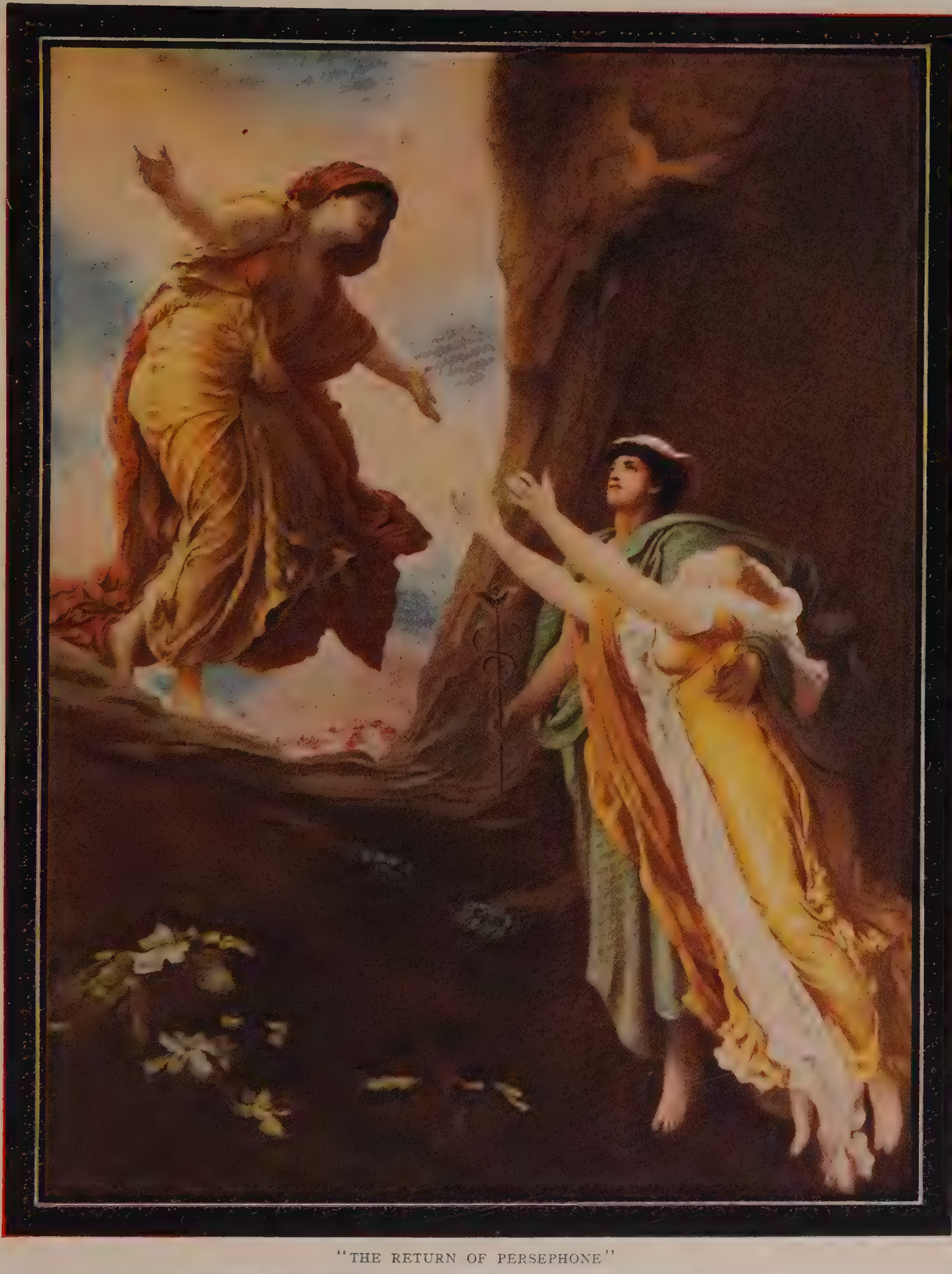
These lines of Catullus (translated by Sir Theodore Martin) may well have inspired Titian, whose picture answers to them perfectly. Ariadne became the grateful wife of Bacchus, who gave her a crown of seven stars which, after her death, he threw into the sky to form a constellation.

§ 6

ECHO AND NARCISSUS

Many of these flowers of myth are perpetuated by flower-names, none more beautifully than the myth of Echo and Narcissus. Echo, the beautiful Oread (nymph of the mountains) annoyed Diana by her ceaseless chatter.

Diana pronounced on her this sentence of punishment: "You shall forfeit the use of that tongue with which you have cheated me, except for that one purpose you are so fond of—*reply*. You shall still have the last word, but no power to speak first." This limitation of her speech greatly troubled her when she wished to attract the love of the beautiful youth Narcissus, who, being a confirmed bachelor, repelled her advances as he had those of many other nymphs. Echo, in her shame and chagrin, sought the rocks and mountains, where her form wasted away until only her voice remained. And by that alone we know her still. But



"THE RETURN OF PERSEPHONE"

FROM THE PAINTING BY LORD LEIGHTON, IN THE LEEDS ART GALLERY

The greatest event of the natural year, as the ancients conceived it, was the yearly return of Persephone (Proserpine) from the Infernal Regions to her mother, Ceres, from whom she had been carried away by Pluto to be his queen in the realms of Death. Her guide from the lower to the upper world is the radiant and gallant Mercury.

she was soon avenged. Refusing to love any maiden, Narcissus fell in love with his own image in a pool. Unable to embrace it, he pined and died of grief. The repentant nymphs would have given him burial, but when they looked for his young body they found only the flower which bears his name. The story has been touched on by many poets—by Milton in "Comus," by Chaucer, Spenser, and Goldsmith; and by Cowper in his epigram "On an Ugly Fellow":

Beware, my friend, of crystal brook
Or fountain, lest that hideous hook,
  Thy nose, thou chance to see;
Narcissus' fate would then be thine,
And self-detested thou would'st pine,
  As, self-enamoured, he.

It is clear, then, that the old Greek myths are no esoteric study. So far from being "highbrow" (detestable word!), they are elemental to our language and literature. Men of distinguished birth or origin are prone to assert themselves, and it should not be forgotten that a word or a phrase is equally enhanced by length of history and storage of suggestion. One might refer to hundreds in which a Greek myth is enclosed: such as "Scylla and Charybdis," "rich as Crœsus," "Cerberus," "vulcanite," "amazons," the "heel of Achilles," the "Daily Argus," the "lethal chamber," "sibyl," "nemesis," "Europe," "Titanic," "mentor," "stentorphone," "Nestor," "Pandora's box," "Champs Élysées," "Æolian Hall," "gordian knot," and many more; but space forbids. For any broad understanding of Greek Mythology the reader must be referred to the Bibliography appended to this chapter. In several of the books named he will learn the lie of the enchanted land.

§ 7

IN THE BEGINNING

Our Bible opens with the simple and sublime statement, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Greek myth is much more confused, but it is as deeply concerned with the beginning of all things, and with the answer to man's eternal question, "Whence?" The most widely accepted story was that of Hesiod, who believed that some great Power impressed itself on Chaos and out of nothing brought forth all things. The first ministers of this Power were Uranus, the most ancient of all the gods, and Gæa, or Ge, from whose name, as the name of the earth, we derive our words geology, geography, geometrical, and so forth. From this marriage between Heaven and Earth came the portentous progeny of the Titans, who typified the most tremendous forces of Nature, and the three one-eyed Cyclopes, who were fabled to have become the servants of Vulcan and the makers, afterwards, of Jove's thunderbolts. But the most formidable of all the sons of Uranus was Cronus (Time), otherwise Saturn, who, by his sister Rhea, became the father of Zeus (Jupiter), Aides (Pluto), Poseidon (Neptune), and of three daughters, Vesta, Demeter (Ceres), and Hera (Juno).

Uranus feared his offspring and plunged those he feared most into Tartarus. But Saturn rebelled, and after slaying his father with an iron sickle reigned in his stead over heaven and earth. He, in turn, also feared his children, and is fabled to have swallowed each as it was born. This may symbolise the truth that Time swallows all things, or it may have an even deeper meaning.

The Birth of Jupiter

The story goes that when Rhea had borne her sixth and last child, Jupiter, or Zeus, she saved him by the ruse of wrapping a baby-shaped stone in baby-clothes, which Saturn unthinkingly swallowed.

Meanwhile, Jupiter was hidden in a cave of Mount Ida, where he was suckled by the goat Amalthea and guarded by tenderly vigilant Nymphs. When he had grown adult, he learned of his mother's and his own wrongs and, by means which have no relation to physiology, compelled his father to disgorge his

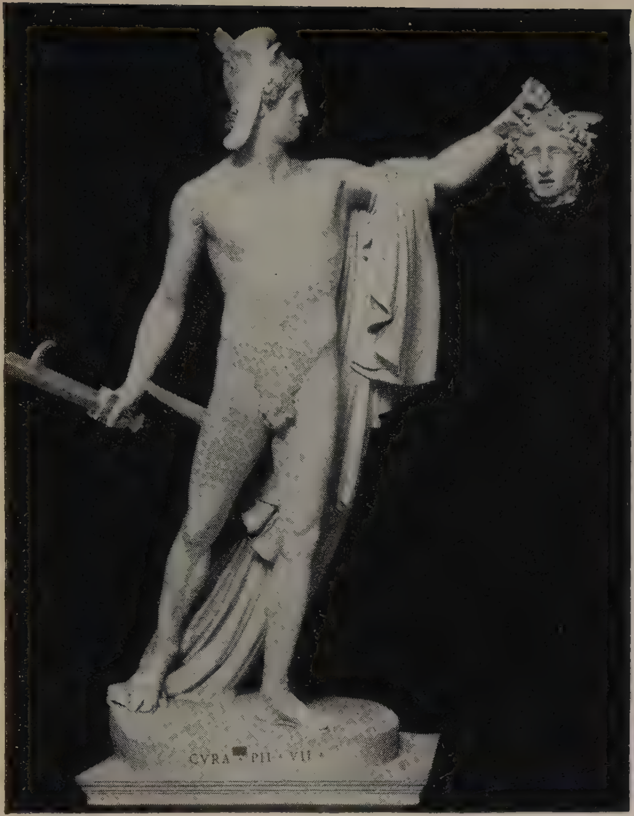


Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

"PERSEUS," BY CANOVA

The Vatican.

Perseus is seen holding the head of the Gorgon Medusa, whose hair had been changed by Minerva into hissing snakes, and whose figure had become that of a monster whose frightful aspect turned all beholders into stone. He was provided by Minerva with her shield, in which, as in a mirror, he could see Medusa's reflection without hurt.

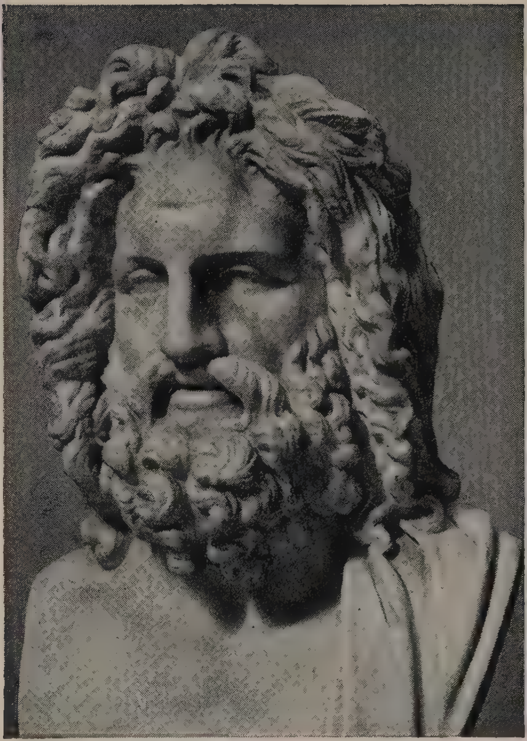


Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

JUPITER

The Vatican.

An ideal representation of Jupiter, to whom Greek and Roman sculptors gave a countenance full of majesty.

> Jove said, and nodded with his shadowy brows;
> Waved on th' immortal head th' ambrosial locks,—
> And all Olympus trembled at his nod.
> HOMER (*trans. by the Earl of Derby*).

Reproduced by permission of the Corporation of Liverpool.

"ECHO AND NARCISSUS," BY J. W. WATERHOUSE

Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

Echo, the mountain nymph, became enamoured of the beautiful youth Narcissus, son of the river-god Cephissus. Her inability to do more than echo his words, and his unwillingness to quit a single life, led to tragedy for both.

Photo: Kischgitz Collection.

ACTÆON DEVOURED BY HIS DOGS

The British Museum.

One of the myths associated with the chaste Diana. She had been seen bathing by Actæon, the famous hunter. In her anger at being espied she transformed him into a stag (see the horns growing out of his head), whereupon he was torn in pieces by his own dogs.

brothers and sisters. Together they defeated Saturn, whose throne Jupiter seized. He divided his universal kingdom with his two brothers, Neptune, who was given the Ocean, and Pluto who was monarch of the dead. Jupiter remained supreme in heaven and on earth. He took his beautiful sister, Juno (the Greeks called her Hera) to wife, by whom, and by others, he begat many of the greater gods and goddesses.

But, first, Jupiter had to fight for his throne on Mount Olympus, which was assailed by the Titans, who, in their cosmic fury, piled Mount Pelion on Mount Ossa to effect their purpose. In his magnificent unfinished poem "Hyperion," Keats makes this Titan the leader in this assault on heaven.

> Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall?
> Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
> This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
> This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
> These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,
> Of all my lucent empire?
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Fall!—No, by Tellus and her briny robes!
> I will advance a terrible right arm
> Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,
> And bid old Saturn take his throne again.

This stupendous war for the control of all things is described by Hesiod in terms which make the brain reel—though whether, in the advance of destructive science, it will do so much longer is a solemn question.

> Vast Olympus reel'd throughout,
> Down to its rooted base, beneath the rush
> Of those immortals: the vast chasm of hell
> Was shaken with the trembling . . .
> No longer then did Jove
> Curb down his force; but sudden in his soul
> There grew dilated strength, and it was fill'd
> With his omnipotence; his whole of might
> Brake from him, and the godhead rush'd abroad . . .

Thrown from his nervous grasp the lightnings flew
Reiterated, swift; the whirling flash
Cast sacred splendour, and the thunderbolt
Fell.

And the Titans fell. They were enchained in Tartarus, "so far beneath this earth as earth is distant from the sky."

§ 8

THE OLYMPIANS

Jove now reigned secure and the great Olympian household was formed. Its chief members were:

The Great Deities

Jupiter (or Zeus), the Thunderer, the supreme god, whose altars on earth surpassed all others. He is represented as throned, with a thunderbolt in his hand, and wearing a breastplate whose name, "ægis," is an English word to-day. His emblem, the eagle, was always represented in his statues. Hence, in *Cymbeline* the soothsayer says:

Last night the very gods show'd me a vision:
. . . . . .

I saw Jove's bird, the Roman eagle, wing'd
From the spungy south to this part of the west,
There vanish'd in the sunbeams: which portends,
Unless my sins abuse my divination,
Success to the Roman host.

Juno (or Hera), his wife, who bore Mars (or Ares), Vulcan (or Haephestos), and Hebe. She was queen of heaven. Among her emblems were the peacock and the cuckoo. She distrusted her husband, and loved Greece.

Mars, the god of war.

Vulcan (or Haephestos), the god of fire, and the armourer of the gods.

Hebe, the blooming daughter of Jupiter and Juno, who was

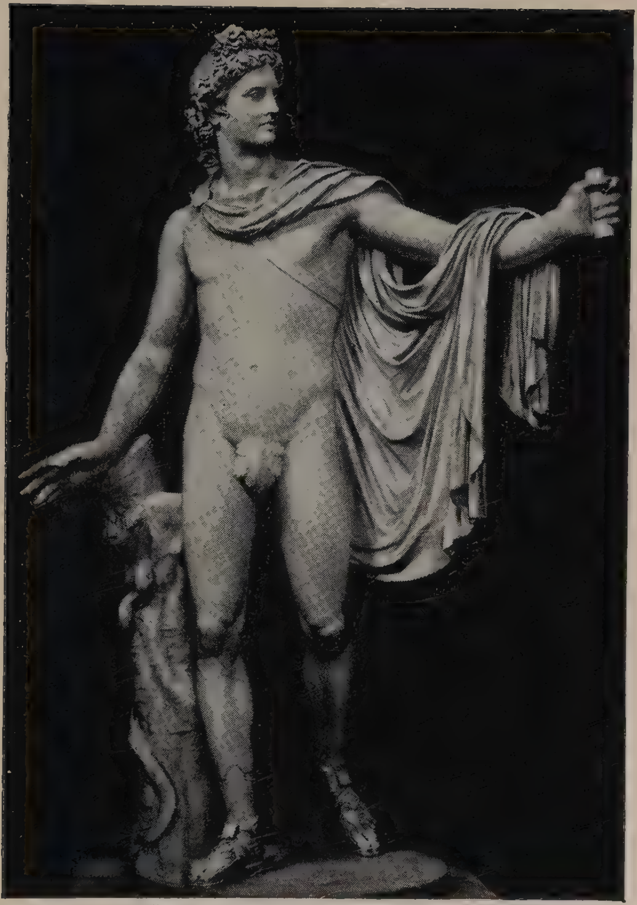


Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

APOLLO BELVEDERE

The Vatican.

In this famous statue, by an unknown Roman sculptor, the Sun God is seen in the act of loosing the arrow with which he is said to have destroyed the monster, Python.

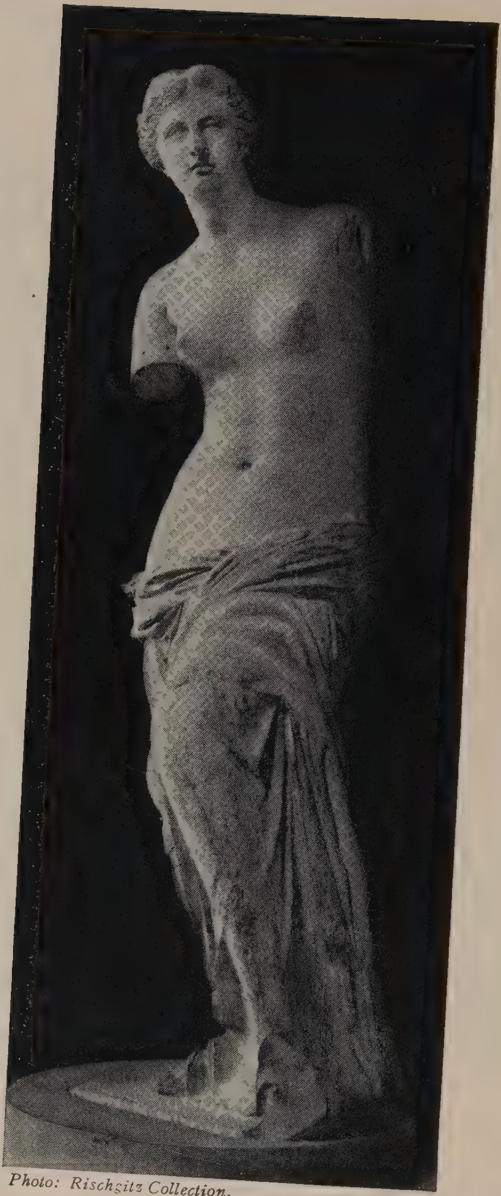


Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

VENUS DE MILO

The Louvre, Paris.

This conception of Venus, now in the Louvre, is attributed to a sculptor of the third century B.C. All the grace, joyousness, and dignity attributed to the goddess are expressed in this exquisite statue. There has been more discussion than agreement concerning the manner in which the lost arms were employed.

the cupbearer to the gods in the Olympian halls and was so beautiful that she was regarded, also, as the goddess of youth. Thus it is that her name is often lightly used to-day as a synonym for "barmaid"; but thus, also, is it one of the names with which poets gem their most beautiful lines. What does Keats say?

> Let, then, winged Fancy find
> Thee a mistress to her mind . . .
> With a waist and with a side
> White as Hebe's, when her zone
> Slipt its golden clasp, and down
> Fell her kirtle to her feet,
> While she held the goblet sweet,
> And Jove grew languid.

Apollo (or Phœbus), the god of the Sun, and patron of music and poetry, of whom Shelley sings:

> I am the eye with which the Universe
> Beholds itself and knows itself divine;
> All harmony of instrument or verse,
> All prophecy, all medicine are mine,
> All light of art or nature; to my song,
> Victory and praise in their own right belong.

The glorious statue of Apollo Belvedere, in the Vatican, represents him shooting his arrow at the terrible serpent Python, which he slew. Byron describes his pose in "Childe Harold":

> The lord of the unerring bow,
> The god of life, and poetry, and light,
> The Sun, in human limbs arrayed, and brow
> All radiant from his triumph in the fight.
> The shaft has just been shot; the arrow bright
> With an immortal's vengeance; in his eye
> And nostril, beautiful disdain, and might,
> And majesty flash their full lightnings by,
> Developing in that one glance the Deity.

Diana (or Artemis), the goddess of hunting, daughter of Latona, by Jupiter, and twin sister of Apollo—therefore associated with the moon. She is often identified with Silene. Although she was the patroness of Chastity, she descended to woo Endymion, the youthful shepherd, on Mount Latmos, whose name gives the title to Keats's earliest long poem and to the last of Disraeli's novels. Few names are more frequent in poetry than those of Diana and Endymion.

VENUS (or Aphrodite), goddess of love and beauty, daughter of Jupiter and Dione, but more beautifully fabled to have risen from the foam of the sea. Her name and attributes have passed into all literature.

MERCURY (or Hermes), the young and graceful messenger of the gods, was the son of Jupiter and Maia, the most beautiful of the seven Pleiades. The name Hermes is interpreted as the "hastener." One of Mercury's chief tasks was to conduct the souls of the dead to the banks of the dreadful river Styx, which flowed nine times round Hades. As a swift messenger he wore a *petasus,* a winged hat, and bore in his hand the *caduceus,* a wand of gold twined with serpents and also winged. He was the god of eloquence, and the patron of commerce, even of gambling and thieving, and of all occupations which required craft or cunning. He is said to have made the first lyre out of a tortoise-shell, and to have presented it to Apollo in exchange for the *caduceus.* His manly beauty is referred to in Hamlet's impassioned speech to his mother as he bade her look at his father's portrait:

> A station like the herald Mercury,
> New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill.

VESTA (or Hestia), daughter of Cronus and Rhea, was the goddess of all public and private hearths. She remained single. The Romans especially honoured her, and in her temple her sacred fire was tended by six virgin priestesses, who were severely punished if they allowed it to expire. In that event it was rekindled from the heat of the sun.

Minerva (Athene, or Pallas Athene), goddess of wisdom, was in some respects the greatest of the goddesses. She was the daughter of Jupiter and Metis. When Metis predicted to Jupiter that one of his children would supplant him, he endeavoured to make this impossible, so the myth tells us, by devouring his wife. Then, being tortured by pains in his head, he ordered Vulcan to cleave it open with an axe. From his exposed brain Minerva leaped forth fully grown and armed with spear and shield. The event shook Olympus, and Apollo stayed his chariot to contemplate the wonder. The goddess immediately took her place in the Olympian assembly. She remained a virgin, and was the most loved child of Jupiter as having proceeded from himself. She had many powers and functions, but was worshipped in Athens as the goddess of wisdom. Her colossal statue in ivory and gold, by Phidias, surmounted the Parthenon and looked down on the city of which she was protectress. She had won the city as a prize in a competition with Neptune to determine which of them could make the most valuable gift to men. Neptune smote the ground with his trident and from the ground a horse issued; but Minerva produced the olive, which the gods judged to be the more useful, and her reward was Athens, "the eye of Greece, mother of arts and eloquenc." The olive-tree was deemed sacred to her.

Minerva is represented with the shield given her by Jupiter, in whose centre was Medusa, upon whose face all who dared to look were turned into stone. Milton puts into the mouth of the Elder Brother in "Comus" the question:

> What was that snaky-headed Gorgon-shield
> That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
> Wherewith she freezed her foes to congealed stone,
> But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
> And noble grace that dashed brute violence
> With sudden adoration and blank awe!

These were pre-eminently the deities of heaven.

Neptune (or Poseidon) ruled the sea and all the waters of earth. He wielded the trident, the symbol of naval power to-day. He ruled all the lesser divinities of the waters—Triton, his son by Amphitrite, Proteus, the Sirens, and the Sea-nymphs—Oceanides and Nereids. Shakespeare has many references to Neptune.

§ 9

THE RAPE OF PROSERPINE

Pluto reigned in Hades, the infernal world whose dread rivers of Styx, Acheron, Lethe, Cocytus, and Phlegethon traversed the realm of darkness in the midst of which he sat on his sulphur throne. No temples were raised to the Lord of Death. No goddess could be induced to be his spouse. Hence arose one of the most beautiful and significant stories in all Greek myth. Demeter (or Ceres), goddess of corn and harvests, from whose Roman name we have our word "cereal," wandered with her daughter Persephone, whose name is also Proserpine, in the flowery plain of Enna, in Sicily. The mother, goddess of the Earth, was a daughter of Saturn and Rhea; their marriage had united Earth to Heaven. Her child, to whom Zeus himself was father, was to unite Earth to Hades.

Proserpine, as the Romans called her, was gathering flowers with her young companions near Enna, when suddenly Pluto appeared in his chariot, loved her at sight, and instantly seized her to be his consort in his silent realm. Proserpine dropped the flowers from her apron and cried aloud to her attendant nymphs, but the ravishing god urged forward his steeds until they were checked by the River Cyane. There Pluto, in a frenzy of passion, smote the ground with his sceptre; it opened, and gave him passage down to Erebus. The young girl-goddess, torn from the sunlight and the happy earth, had become the bride of the god of death.

Ceres sought her child in a frenzy of grief. She lit two

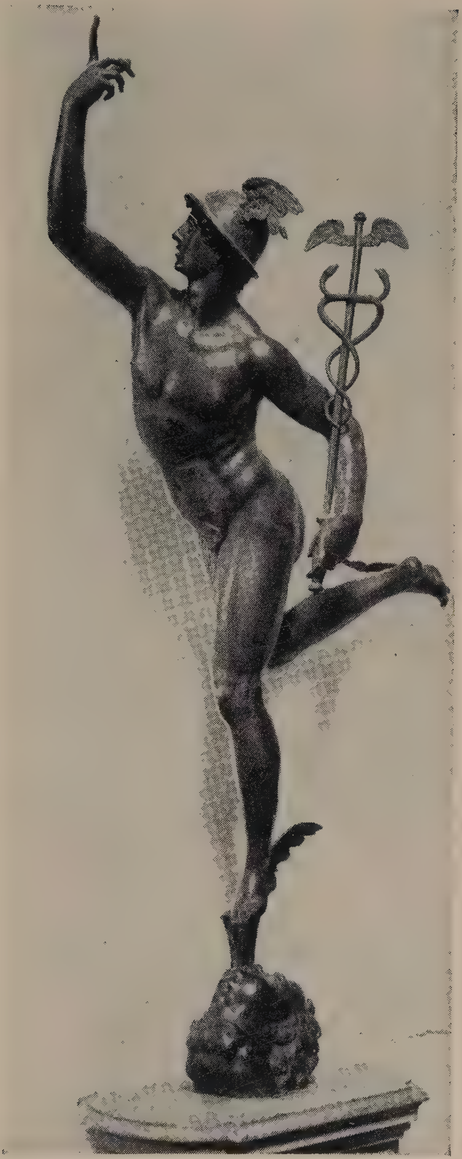


Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

THE FAMOUS MERCURY BRONZE BY BOLOGNA

National Museum, Florence.

In this photograph of a beautiful statue, note the wings on Mercury's cap (*petasus*), presented to him by his father, Jupiter, and the wings on his feet (*talaria*). His wand (*caduceus*), given him by Apollo, was said to have the power to turn natural hatred into love: hence the two serpents embracing.

torches at the fires of Mount Etna that she might search the world through the night. Neither gods nor men could, or dared, tell her of Proserpine's fate. Nine days she wandered, and at last, returning to Sicily, she learned the truth from Arethusa, who had just passed through the nether world in her chaste flight from Alpheus. "There," she said, "I saw your Proserpine. She was sad, but no longer was there terror in her eyes. Her look was such as became the Queen of the realms of the dead."

Drawn in her chariot by two dragons, Ceres flew to the abode of the gods, where she awed even Jove by her storm of prayers—

> So mighty was the mother's childless cry,
> A cry that rang thro' Hades, Earth, and Heaven.

Yielding to her, Jove sent Mercury to demand Proserpine of Pluto, but made it a condition of her release that she should not have tasted food in the lower world. When he arrived and Pluto was about to yield, it appeared that Proserpine, walking in the Elysian fields, had sucked the pulp of a pomegranate. This forbade her surrender, but as a compromise it was decreed that she should evermore spend half of the year with her mother on the earth, and half with her husband below it.

Ceres waited with far-off gaze for her coming, and the meeting of mother and daughter has been the theme of poets from Ovid to Tennyson. It is our own poet who describes their meeting:

> A sudden nightingale
> Saw thee, and flash'd into a frolic of song
> And welcome; and a gleam as of the moon,
> When first she peers along the tremulous deep,
> Fled wavering o'er thy face, and chased away
> That shadow of a likeness to the King
> Of Shadows, thy dark mate. Persephone!
> Queen of the dead no more—my child! Thine eyes
> Again were human-godlike, and the Sun
> Burst from a swimming fleece of winter gray,

And robed thee in his day from head to feet—
"*Mother!*" and I was folded in thine arms.

This is the deathless story. It has but one meaning. Proserpine signifies the seed-corn, which through the winter lies darkly hidden in the soil, and her yearly return is the symbol of the spring.

So in the pleasant vale we stand again,
The field of Enna, now once more ablaze
With flowers that brighten as thy footstep falls.

Nothing that man knows is so interesting to him, or so fraught with the mystery which enlarges without weighing him down, as the change of the seasons. Still, in his poetry and imagination, Ceres and Proserpine walk together hand-in-hand, and once more they lead us, through the lights of spring, to the pomp which is roses, and the wealth which is corn, and the sweetness which is honey in the honeycomb.

. . . .

Such, in meagre outline, is that world of myth which shimmers for ever behind "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome." Much of it is crude, or even repellent, but what is beautiful and what is forbidding belongs alike to the childhood of man. Ruskin says: "To the mean person the myth means little; to the noble person much." The poet, the artist, and the dreamer will return to these stories so long as men feel the burden and the mystery of life, and are fain to lose them in "the light that never was on sea or land."

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VII

GREECE AND ROME

GREECE AND ROME

§ 1

The Greek Spirit

BEFORE proceeding to consider the achievements of the great Greek poets, it is necessary to say something of the Greek spirit, that particular national genius which enabled a small people in the fifth century before Christ to produce a literature of unparalleled grandeur and dignity, to rise to a splendid height of excellence in architecture and sculpture, and to lay the foundations of mathematics, physical science, and philosophy. It has been well said that "with the exception of Christianity, the Greeks were the beginners of nearly everything of which the modern world can boast."

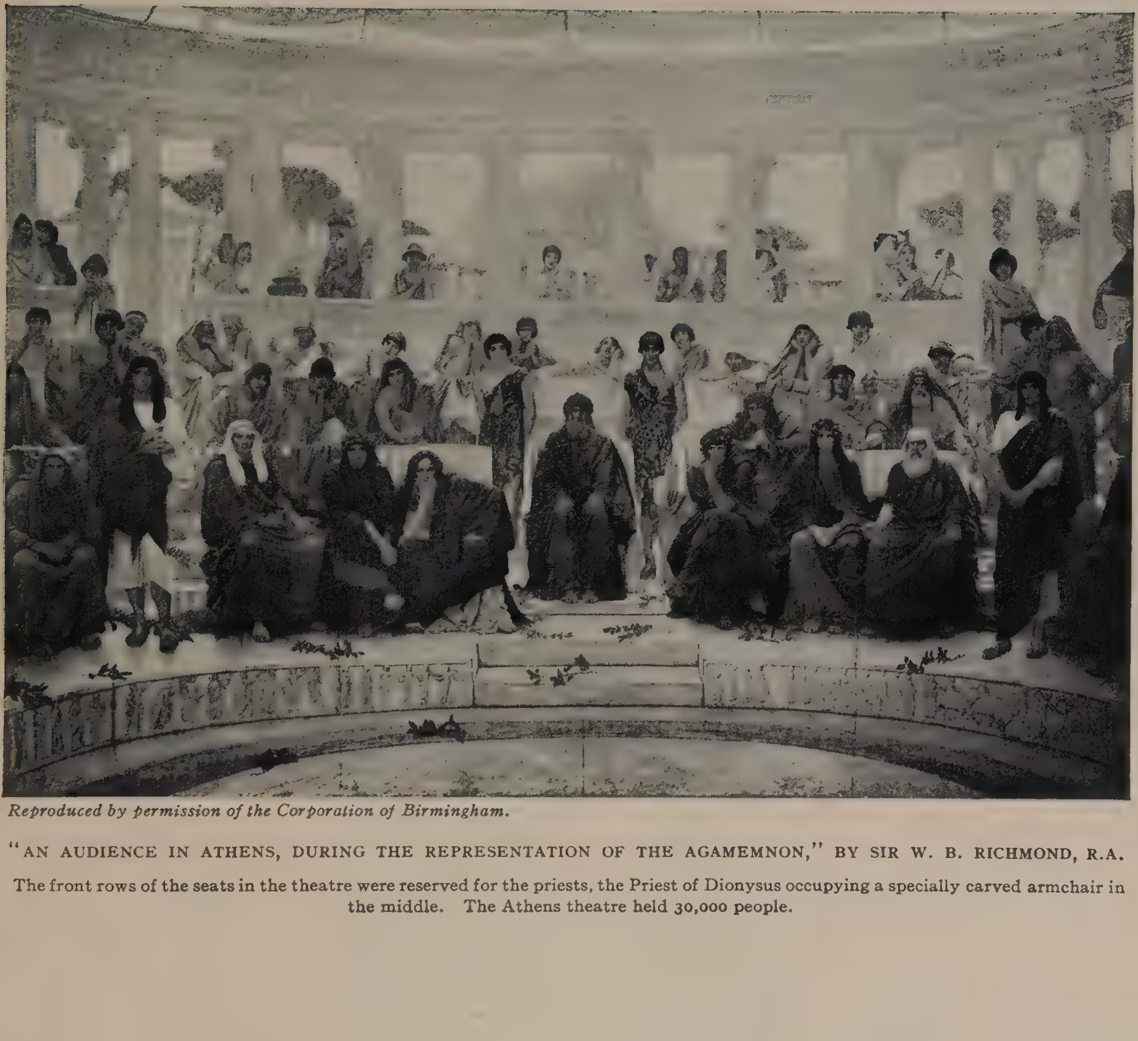
The Greeks had great limitations. They knew nothing about the past. At the best they only guessed. They knew no geography. They knew next to nothing about other peoples. On the other hand they had one great asset, a beautiful language, particularly fitted, in its power and precision, for the immortal expression of beautiful thoughts. The Greeks themselves were highly civilised, but they were only separated from barbarism by a very thin interval. They were our dawn, but a dawn that came, so far as we know, without preparation or warning. The Greeks were a young people living in the cold clear air of the early morning. There is a strong contrast between the Greeks and the Hebrews. To the Hebrew, the sorrow of the world was due to disobedience to the laws of the one all-powerful God. The Greeks had no idea of a single God, beneficent in intention, directing the affairs of men. They had many gods, constantly warring with each other, only intermittently concerned with human affairs, all of them actuated by human passions, and mainly concerned with their own adventures.

But behind the gods was Fate, determining the destiny alike of men and gods, and against Fate it was useless to contend. That is the prevailing note of Greek tragedy. It brought with it a great sense of dignity. Self-respect demanded that men should accept the decrees of Fate without protest, without pretence that things were other than they were, and without yearnings for the unattainable. Self-respect, too, compelled man to eschew evil and follow good without any thought of the gods of their desires.

The Greeks were never mystics, they were realists. It has been well said that to Homer a wave was "nothing else than salt water." To the Greek death was death. What happened after he did not know and he did not trouble to guess. To the Greek mind man stood alone and unaided in the world, and because he so often triumphed over difficulties and accepted with splendid dignity the hardest decrees of Fate, the worship of humanity became the dominating feature of Greek life and Greek religion. This worship brought with it the love for everything that makes human life fine. The first of these things was beauty. The idols of India and Egypt are hideous and repulsive, signifying terror and power. But the Greeks could only worship beautiful gods. and their statues enshrine the dreams and ideals of the worshippers. With beauty the Greeks loved justice, freedom, and truth—all necessary for the happiness of man.

The Love of Justice, Freedom, and Truth

Perhaps because of the absence of traditions and established conventions, the Greeks were never sentimental. And because they were realists they loved the simple and the unadorned. Greek poetry never has the elaborate ornamentation to be found in such a poem as "Paradise Lost." It is austere. In their litera-



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"AN AUDIENCE IN ATHENS, DURING THE REPRESENTATION OF THE AGAMEMNON," BY SIR W. B. RICHMOND, R.A.

The front rows of the seats in the theatre were reserved for the priests, the Priest of Dionysus occupying a specially carved armchair in the middle. The Athens theatre held 30,000 people.

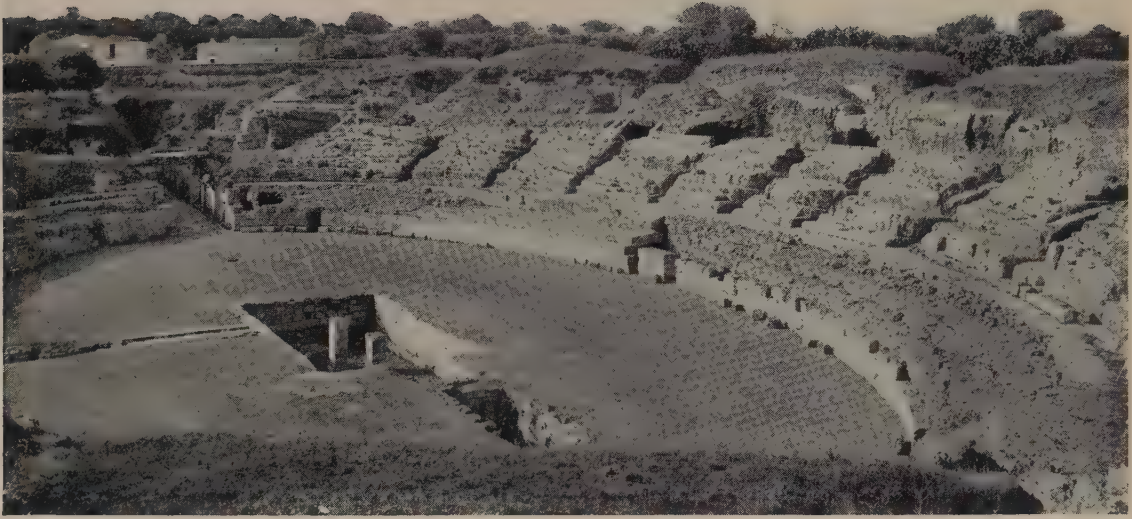


Photo: Brogi.

AMPHITHEATRE AT SYRACUSE IN SICILY, ONE OF THE MOST PERFECT RUINS OF A GREEK THEATRE IN EXISTENCE

The photograph indicates the immense size of that great theatre. Sicily was one of the earliest Greek colonies, and Æschylus died there in 456 B.C.

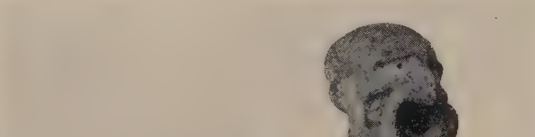


Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

COMIC ACTORS. ROMAN ANTIQUITIES

The classic actors, like the Japanese actors of to-day, wore large masks and boots with soles almost like stilts, which gave the appearance of more than human height.

ture as in their sculpture, the Greeks achieved the beauty of simple directness—of sheer truth.

Three facts should be particularly borne in mind. The Greeks were a small people living in a number of City States, each with a few thousand inhabitants, and all of them on the sea. Athens was the most remarkable and most interesting of these States, and by far the greater part of the Greek literature that has come down to us was produced in one small city, far less in area and with a far smaller population than a London suburb. The second fact is that certainly eighty per cent. of Greek literature has been lost. All that exists was preserved in Alexandria. The third fact is that the wars waged by the Greeks against the Persians occasioned the birth of European patriotism. The fear of the barbarian not only stimulated love of country, but also caused the Greeks to regard themselves as the guardians of culture against barbarian destruction.

The Greek spirit means the love of unadorned beauty, simplicity, truth, freedom, and justice, the dislike of exaggeration, sentimentality, and elaboration.

The old-world stories summarised in the preceding chapter are the substance of Greek romantic literature. Evolved in the dawn of European life, sung by wandering bards, repeated and elaborated from generation to generation, they were first, as has already been related, written out in Hesiod and Homer. In these same stories the great Greek dramatists found the plots of their plays.

It is remarkable in how few years the great Athenian drama was produced. Æschylus gained his first prize in 484 B.C., and the *Medea* of Euripides, the crowning achievement of his career was produced in 431 B.C. Fifty-three years were sufficient for the complete development of what has been described as "the greatest work of art the world has ever witnessed." A similar remarkable development characterised the drama in Elizabethan England. All the plays of Marlowe, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Webster, and Heywood were written in thirty-eight years!

§ 2

The Greek Theatre

Like the beginnings of mediæval drama in England, those of early Greek drama were religious. They grew out of the ritual dance performed in the spring-time before the shrines of Dionysus, the Bacchus of the Romans, and the intimate connection with the god of vineyards and fruitfulness remained unimpaired in the great days of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. The front row of the seats in the theatre in Athens was reserved for the priests, the Priest of Dionysus occupying a specially carved armchair in the middle. All citizens were expected to attend and in the days of Pericles at the height of the power and glory of Athens the price of their seats was given them by the state. The Athens theatre held 30,000 people. Everyone went to the theatre. It was a national duty.

All the plays performed were the result of competitions held by the Government, which was also what we should call the Church, and the companies which acted them were paid for by wealthy men. If you wished to compete—and there could only be three competitors each year—you had first to be given a chorus, that is to say, some wealthy man would pay for a company which would act the play you were going to write. Because the idea of failure would have been ill-omened in what was a religious ceremony everybody received a prize in the competition.

The practice of the theatre developed as the great tragic period represented by the three authors named above took its course. At the beginning all the action took place in the circular space of the orchestra, and the "scene," as it was called, was not a stage, but merely a tent in which the actors changed their clothes, and which could be used, as the similar curtains at the back of an Elizabethan theatre were used, to represent a door or a gateway or whatever veiled the action from the spectators, because in Greek drama, unlike in our modern plays, everything in the nature of what we should call incident took place "off." In the plays of Æschylus the characters in the chorus occupied this orchestral space, and for that reason, as well as because the chorus was the element from which tragedy as a whole sprang, the chorus had a prominent part in the action of the play. As theatrical technique developed the scene became a slightly raised platform at the back of the orchestra from which the speeches of the actors were generally delivered, the chorus remaining in the orchestra below and tending, therefore, as in most of the plays of Euripides, to become rather a means of commentary on the action than part of it.

The relaxation from tragic tension which in Shakespeare is got for the most part by comic relief was provided in Greek plays by the choral odes and dances. Compare, for instance, *Macbeth* with the *Hippolytus* of Euripides. In *Macbeth,* unusually for Shakespeare, Duncan is killed in the Greek manner "off" the stage. *Macbeth,* in fact, in its earlier scenes and in its emotional context represents more closely than any other of Shakespeare's plays the Greek way of handling a subject. The tension which the audience must feel as a distracted dialogue between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, when the murder is done, is relieved by the knocking at the gate and the comic scene of the porter. In *Hippolytus,* on the other hand, when Phædra goes off the stage to hang herself, the relief from the tension is not got through any comic relief, which would have been foreign to the whole Greek mode of thinking in drama, but by the ritual dance and the song of the chorus which take the mind of the audience straight away from the tragic reality to the realms of romance.

The Dress of Actors

The actors, like Japanese actors to-day, wore large masks which had probably something of the effect of a megaphone and enabled their voices to be heard clearly at the back of the immense theatre in the open air. They wore buskins, large boots with soles almost like stilts, which gave them an appearance of more than human height, and because of this dress and because of the fact that the story was told by dialogue rather than by obvious action they moved hardly at all across the stage. Below, in the orchestra, grouped round the altar of Dionysus in the middle, was the chorus, motionless while the actors were speaking, and, when their time came, chanting their odes to the rhythmic movements of a dance in which every part of the body had its share, and chanting them not altogether, but in two divisions, so that the verse sung by one half would be answered by a following verse sung by the other. In the telling of the story certain conventions were generally observed. There was usually a prologue explaining the circumstances before the action began. The crisis, as we have said, almost always took place "off," and was always narrated to the audience by a messenger, whose speech generally is the culmination of a play. The play ended, at any rate in the developed technique of Euripides, though not so generally in the two preceding dramatists, with the appearance of some god who summed up in a few words of comfort or reconciliation the tragic passion of the drama and sent the spectators away with a sense of peace.

§ 3

Æschylus

There is a striking resemblance, both in the novelty of their achievement and the circumstances of their lives, between the writers of the wonder century of Greece—the fifth century B.C.—and the English writers of the Elizabethan era, like Spenser and Raleigh. Æschylus, the eldest of the three great Greek dramatists, was a soldier. He was born in 525 B.C., and he fought in the Athenian army that defeated the Persians at the famous battle of Marathon. This decisive victory of a small people over a mighty empire had an immense effect on the character of

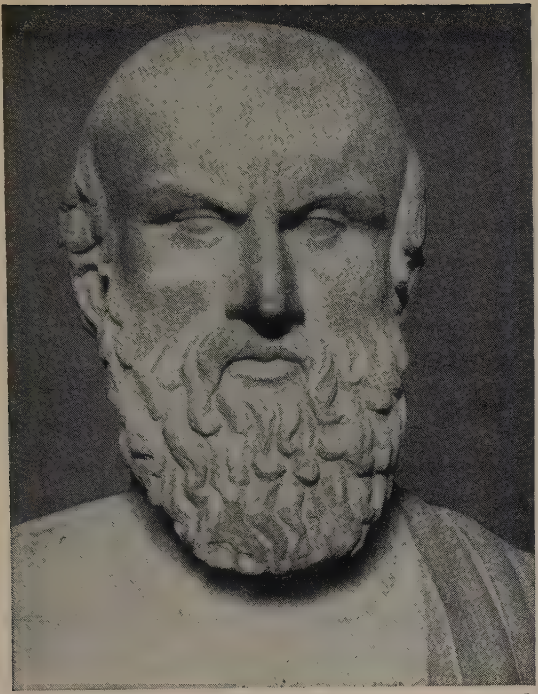


Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

ÆSCHYLUS

The first of the Greek Dramatists.

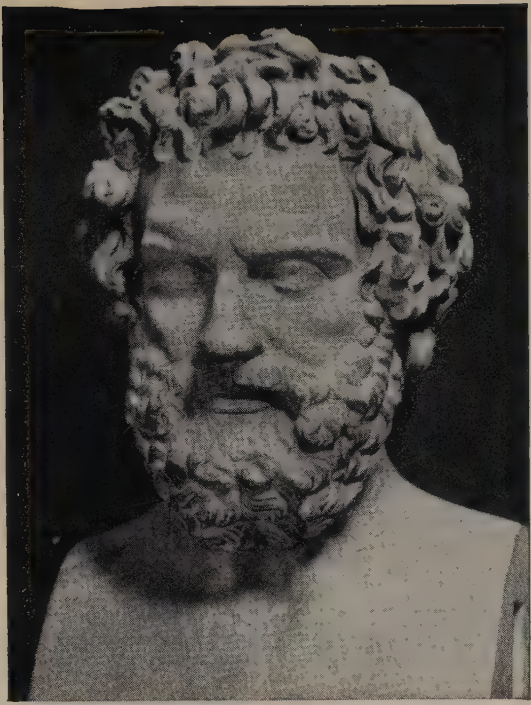


Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

SOPHOCLES

Sophocles was the second of the Greek dramatists.

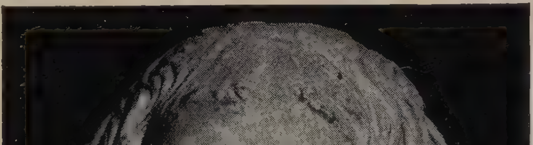


Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

EURIPIDES

The Vatican, Rome.

The third and greatest of the Greek tragic writers.

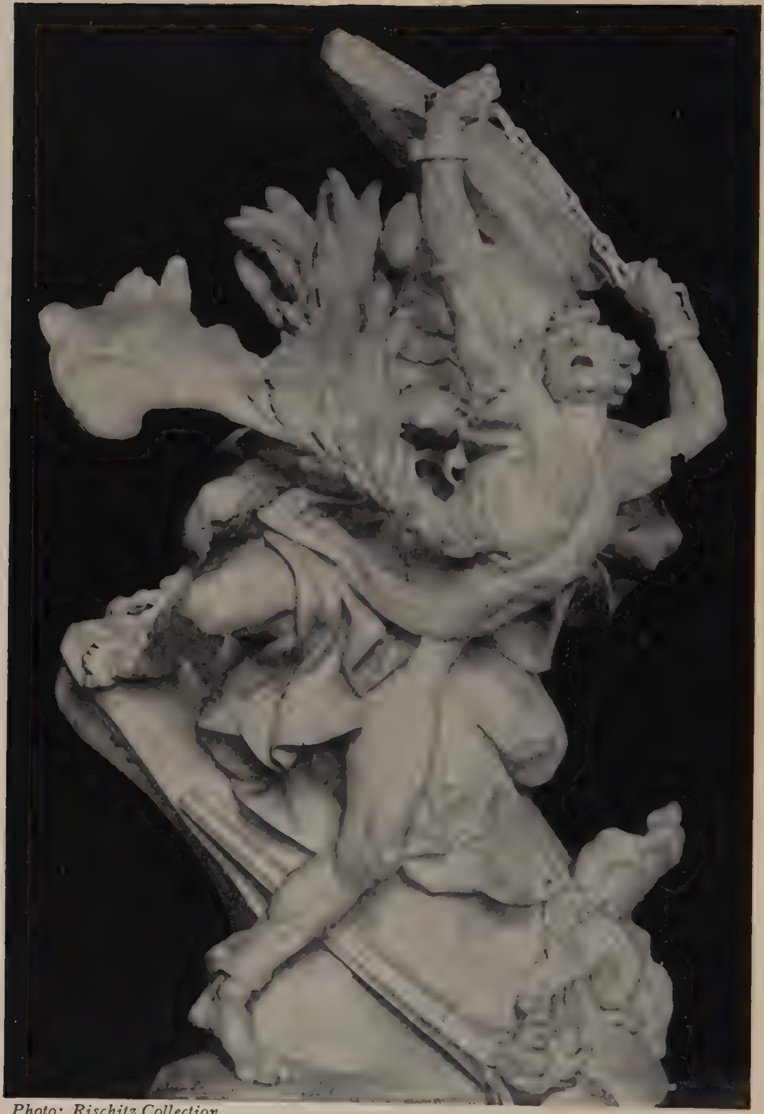


Photo: Rischitz Collection.

"PROMETHEUS BOUND, DEVOURED BY A VULTURE," BY ADAM LE JEUNE

The Louvre, Paris.

A fine imaginative conception of the climax of the Æschylus tragedy. Prometheus offended Jupiter. He was first chained to a rock and then, as further punishment, an eagle was sent to gnaw at his flesh, and the earth opened, the rock to which Prometheus was chained sinking into the abyss.

Æschylus and of his work. His plays were written in a heroic age when men were stimulated by unexpected and almost unhoped for national success, just as the Elizabethans were stimulated by the defeat of the Spanish Armada.

The first play of Æschylus was produced when he was twenty-six, in the first year, that is, of the wonder century—the 5th B.C. Like Shakespeare, he acted in his own dramas and though only seven of them are extant, he is supposed to have written ninety. There is a legend that he was killed by an eagle dropping on his bald head, which it mistook for a rock, a tortoise the shell of which the bird had been unable to break.

Religious fervour joined in Æschylus with pride of country and race, the result of the glory of Marathon. He was born at Eleusis (in 525 B.C.), the home of those religious mysteries the nature of which the modern world knows very little. As a boy he must have seen scores of pilgrims troubled in spirit, seeking explanation of life's problems or maybe release from trouble, and he grew up obsessed with the conviction of the impossibility of escape from the fates and furies that pursue the steps of men.

For the plots of his plays he went to the myths of his people. He himself said that his tragedies were "morsels from the banquet of Homer."

What are the qualities of Æschylus that have given his plays immortality and that cause them to be read with eager interest and enjoyment two thousand four hundred years after they were written? Perhaps their character can best be explained by comparing Æschylus to an Elizabethan, Marlowe, and a modern, Victor Hugo. Like Marlowe, Æschylus was, to use Swinburne's phrase, "a daring and inspired pioneer." In his music there is no echo of any man's before him. Read Marlowe's *History of Dr. Faustus* and you are in touch with the qualities of Æschylus—the horror, the tremendous power, the excited passion. Aristophanes, the Athenian writer of comedies, denounced Æschylus as "bombastic," and it is interesting to note that this is the adjective frequently applied by critics to Victor Hugo, who, in a less degree than Marlowe, possessed some of the characteristics of the Greek poet.

There is never any love interest in the Æschylus plays. He was interested in elemental forces, and he gave Fate and Fear, Justice and Injustice the same individual personality as Bunyan gave to similar qualities in his *Pilgrim's Progress.* In his dramas, as J. A. Symonds said, "mountains were made to speak." So tremendous was the power of Æschylus, that the Greeks believed that he must have written under the immediate inspiration of the gods. One story says that, when he was a boy, he was sent to watch the clusters of grapes in a vineyard, and fell asleep. While he slept the god Dionysus came to him and ordered him to write tragedies. When he awoke he made his first attempt and succeeded at once. Sophocles said of his great rival: "He did what he ought to do, but did it without knowing." Certain of his contemporaries asserted that he wrote his tragedies while drunk with wine. The fact seems to have been that his originality and genius were so astounding that his fellows were forced to find some superhuman explanation for them.

Of the seven plays of Æschylus that have been preserved, *Prometheus Bound* is perhaps the most interesting for us from the fact of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound.* It was the second of a trilogy of plays, the first of which was called *Prometheus the Fire-Bearer,* and the third *Prometheus Unbound.* Both of these have been lost, although a portion of the third translated into Latin by Cicero remains to us. A summary of the play may give some idea of the mind and manner of the dramatists.

A Summary of "Prometheus Bound"

At the beginning of the drama, Prometheus, who has offended Zeus, is chained to a rock by Hephæstus, the god who corresponds to the Latin Vulcan. Zeus has recently established his dynasty in Heaven and has determined to destroy the human race and to populate the earth with a finer creation. Prometheus is the typical benefactor of mankind. He has prevented the god's proposed destruction by giving man the gift of fire, the most ancient of all arts, and subsequently teaching him carpentry, husbandry, medicine, and seamanship. And for this rebellion Zeus has decreed his dreadful punishment. While he is being bound Prometheus remains proudly silent, but when Hephæstus has left him he cries out to the Earth and the Sun to see how he, a god, is wronged by other gods:

You see me prisoned here, a god ill-starred,
Of Zeus the enemy, hated of all
That tread the courts of his omnipotence,
Because of mine exceeding love for men.

He is visited by the Ocean Nymphs, and to them he emphasises his services to mankind:

'Twas I that first to yoke and collar tamed
The servant steer, and to relieve mankind
From Labours manifold, the docile steed
I drew beneath the well-appointed car,
Proud instrument of wealthy mortals' pride.
And none save I found for the mariner
His wave-o'er-wandering chariot, canvas-winged.
I, that devised thus gloriously for men,
Myself have no device to rid my soul
Of her sore burden!

One satisfaction is left to Prometheus. He knows, and he alone, that a dire fate awaits Zeus himself—"It shall hurl him down from power supreme to nothing." His prophecy is repeated to the god, who sends Hermes to Prometheus to demand details of the threatened danger. He refuses to speak. Hermes reminds him of the punishment which has already followed rebellion, and he replies:

I would not change it for thy servitude.
Better to grieve than be a lackeying slave.

Further punishment promptly follows. An eagle is sent to gnaw at his flesh; the earth opens, and the rock to which Prometheus is chained sinks into the abyss. There has been considerable discussion as to the religious meaning that Æschylus attached to his story, and it is suggested that in the third of the plays, one of the two that are lost, Prometheus and Zeus are reconciled. The moral of the trilogy is that the gods "learned the stern spirit of the law, but tempered the disposition with their natural sympathy for humanity. So arose the new order, the rule of reasonable law."

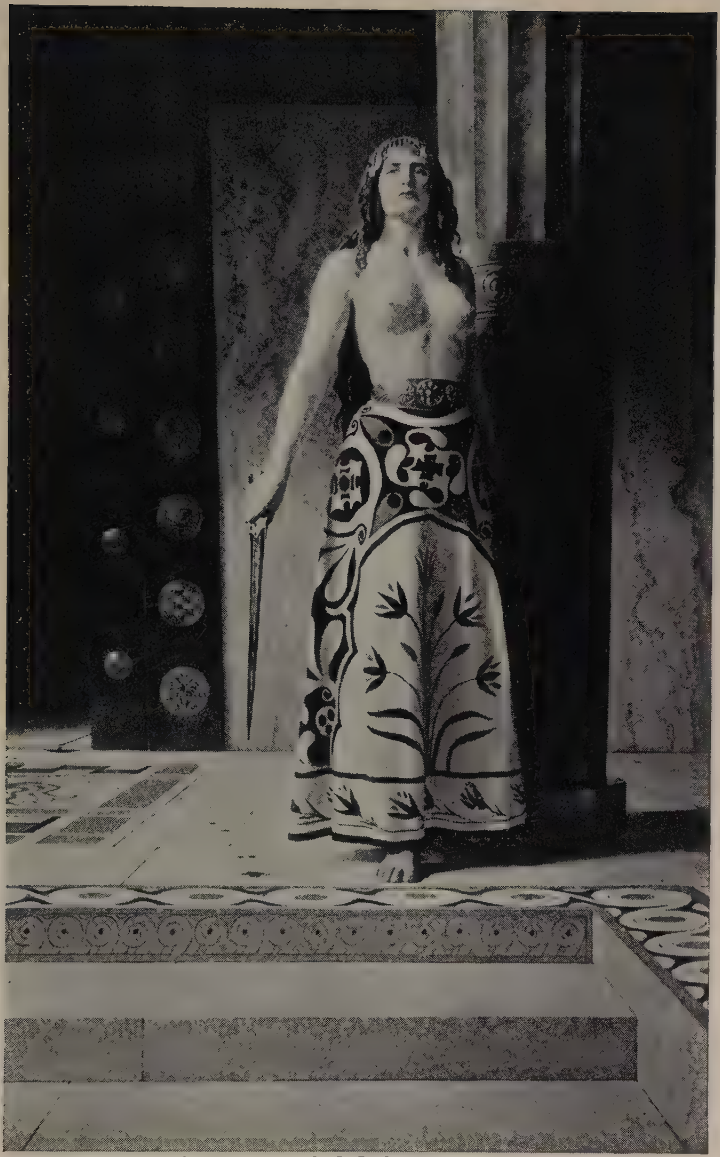
Apart from Prometheus, the most interesting character that Æschylus created was Clytemnestra in the mighty drama *Agamemnon.* Clytemnestra has been compared to Lady Macbeth, but she is really made of harder metal, ready, as J. A. Symonds says, to "browbeat truth before the judgment seat of gods or men." When she has killed Agamemnon there is no weakening, no regret. She is the minister of Fate, the minister of Justice, the typical "Fury" of the Greeks. Agamemnon is an unattractive character, and the hatred of his wife is not unreasonable. Nothing, however, can excuse Clytemnestra's crime or ward off her punishment. Her son, Orestes, becomes the avenger of his father, and in the *Choephori,* the sequel to the *Agamemnon,* Orestes kills his mother. He is pursued by the Erinnyes, the daughters of the night and the ministers of punishment. In a third play, the *Eumenides,* Orestes after great tribulation is forgiven by the gods. Here, as elsewhere, Æschylus insists that sin must be paid for before it can be forgiven.

Æschylus died in 456 B.C. in Sicily, where he is said to have gone in dudgeon at the fact that the first prize at one of the great dramatic contests at Athens had been awarded to his younger rival, Sophocles.

§ 4

Sophocles

Sophocles was one of the sunniest-natured great writers in the history of literature. He was born in 495 B.C., and was thirty



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"CLYTEMNESTRA," BY THE HON. JOHN COLLIER

The central figure of the Agamemnon. Clytemnestra has often been compared to Lady Macbeth. She was the typical fury of the Greeks, who "browbeat truth before the judgment seat of gods and men."

The picture of Clytemnestra which appears as a Colour Plate was painted by Mr. Collier in 1881 and was an attempt to put the Homeric story into the Mycenæan age, but owing to insufficient information the costume and important details of the architecture are incorrect. In the later version which appears above (painted in 1914) the artist has made use of more recent researches, and has ample authority for all the details.

Photo: Blaxland Stubbs.

ANTIGONE STREWING DUST ON THE BODY OF HER BROTHER, POLYNICES, IN THE SOPHOCLES DRAMA

From the Painting by Victor J. Robertson.

Polynices was killed while leading an assault against the city of Thebes, and Creon, king of Thebes, decreed that his body should remain unburied. Antigone, the sister of Polynices, disobeyed the royal order and gave her brother decent burial, and for this she was condemned to be buried alive in a rocky vault.

years younger than Æschylus, and fifteen years older than Euripides. As a boy, he was famous for his good looks and his proficiency in music and gymnastics. When he was sixteen, he was chosen to lead the chorus of youths which celebrated the great sea-victory of Salamis. He appeared at this festival naked, crowned with a garland and carrying a lyre. Like Æschylus, he was brought up in an atmosphere of patriotic fervour, but his youth was spent in a more settled age.

The art-loving Athenians held Sophocles in great pride and affection. He was known as the "Attic Bee," and his character was summed up by Aristophanes, after the dramatist's death, when he said that he was "kindly in the Shades even as he was on earth." The popularity of Sophocles can be judged from the fact that in his fifty-seventh year he was appointed, by popular acclaim, general in the Samian war. It may seem to us remarkable to appoint a general simply on account of his genius as a poet, but perhaps there is as much to be said for this method of selection as for the mediæval plan of selecting a commander of military or naval forces on account of his birth. It is not, however, surprising that Pericles should have said that he vastly preferred Sophocles the poet to Sophocles the soldier.

A beauty and pleasure loving poet, living in a beauty and pleasure loving age, could hardly be expected to live according to the tenets of Puritan morality. Moderation, never abstention, was the typical Greek virtue. Plato recalls that, at the end of his life, Sophocles rejoiced at his release from the thraldom of passion. "Most gladly have I escaped from that, and I feel as if I had escaped from a mad and furious master."

Sophocles wrote over a hundred dramas, of which only seven remain to us—*Œdipus the King, Œdipus Colonus, Ajax,* the *Antigone, Electra,* the *Trachiniæ,* and *Philoctetes.* He introduced certain reforms into the conventional form of the drama which had been employed by Æschylus. He gave the actors finer costumes, he increased the number of the chorus, and he sometimes allowed three actors to be on the stage at the same time where Æschylus only allowed two. In this way the dialogue became of much greater importance dramatically. Goethe said of Sophocles' plays: "His characters all possess the gift of eloquence, and know how to explain the motives for their actions so convincingly that the hearer is almost always on the side of the last speaker."

While the plots of Sophocles' plays are tragic, and while he never escaped from the prevailing Greek idea of Nemesis, the fate which pursues the whole world, there is in his dramas a far greater serenity than there is in those of Æschylus—the serenity of the age in which Athenian society realised its ideals and its apirations more completely than any human society has done since.

The *Antigone* may be considered as typical of Sophocles' art.[1]

"The Antigone"

Creon, king of Thebes, has decreed that the body of Polynices, who has been killed during an assault on the city, shall remain unburied: "It hath been published to the town that none shall entomb him or mourn, but leave unwept, unsepulchred, a welcome store for the birds, as they spy him, to feast on at will." In spite of the king's decree, Antigone, the sister of Polynices, determines to bury her brother: "I will bury him: well for me to die in doing that. I shall rest, a loved one with him whom I have loved, sinless in my crime; for I owe a longer allegiance to the dead than to the living."

Arrested for her disobedience and taken before Creon, Antigone made no attempt at denial. She knew the king's edict and what must be the consequence of her act. "For me to meet this doom is trifling grief; but if I had suffered my mother's son to lie in death an unburied corpse, that would have grieved me." Antigone is condemned to be buried alive "in a rocky vault."

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[1] The quotations are from Sir Richard Jebb.

There is a love interest in the play. Antigone is betrothed to Hæmon the son of Creon. Hæmon pleads to his father for her, but in vain. The dialogue in the scene between father and son is particularly vivid and extraordinarily modern. Creon is equally deaf to the advice of Teiresias, the blind prophet. The blind man warns the king that swift punishment will follow his obstinacy:

> Thou shalt not live through many more courses of the sun's swift chariot, ere one begotten of thine own loins shall have been given by thee, a corpse for corpses; because thou hast thrust children of the sunlight to the shades, and ruthlessly lodged a living soul in the grave.

And it does. Hæmon hangs himself by the side of Antigone's tomb, and his mother, Eurydice, stabs herself in sorrow for the death of her son. Creon, "a rash and foolish man," is left to mourn alone. The moral of the play is summed up by the Chorus:

> Wisdom is the supreme part of happiness; and reverence towards the gods must be inviolate. Great words of prideful men are ever punished with great blows, and in old age, teach the chastened to be wise.

It will be seen that there is a far greater humanity in Sophocles's tragedy than can be found in Æschylus, but in all the Sophocles plays men remain "the playthings of the gods." To quote Gilbert Murray's translation of the full chorus in *Œdipus the King:*

Ye citizens of Thebes, behold; 'tis Œdipus that passeth here,
Who read the riddle-word of Death, and mightiest stood of mortal men,
And Fortune loved him, and the folk that saw him turned and looked
again.
Lo, he is fallen, and around great storms and the out-reaching sea!

Therefore, O Man, beware, and look toward the end of things that be,
The last of sights, the last of days; and no man's life account as gain
Ere the full tale be finished and the darkness find him without pain.

Sophocles lived to a tranquil old age. His epitaph was written in the famous lines:

> Thrice happy Sophocles! In good old age,
> Praised as a man, and as a craftsman praised,
> He died: his many tragedies were fair,
> And fair his end, nor knew he any sorrow.

§ 5

Euripides

Æschylus was a soldier; Sophocles was a patriotic Athenian, taking more than a dilettante interest in the public affairs of his city. Euripides, the third and youngest of the great Greek dramatists, was a recluse, out of tune with the times, detesting the moods of the Athenian mob, professing to prefer the simple life of the country to the life of the town. As an artist he was an innovator, and his innovations, his breaking with tradition, made him the butt of Aristophanes, a Tory of Tories who hated all changes. Euripides was a sour-tempered man and loathed being laughed at:

> My spirit loathes
> Those mockers whose unbridled mockery
> Invades grave themes.

The poet's temper was probably made the sourer by the fact that he had two wives, both of whom were unfaithful to him. Towards the end of his life he left Athens in disgust to live in Macedonia, where he wrote his last play, the *Bacchæ.* His favour with the king roused the jealousy of certain courtiers, who plotted that he should be attacked and killed by savage dogs.

When Euripides began to write, the Athenians had ceased to believe in the gods, whose existence and ever-present power

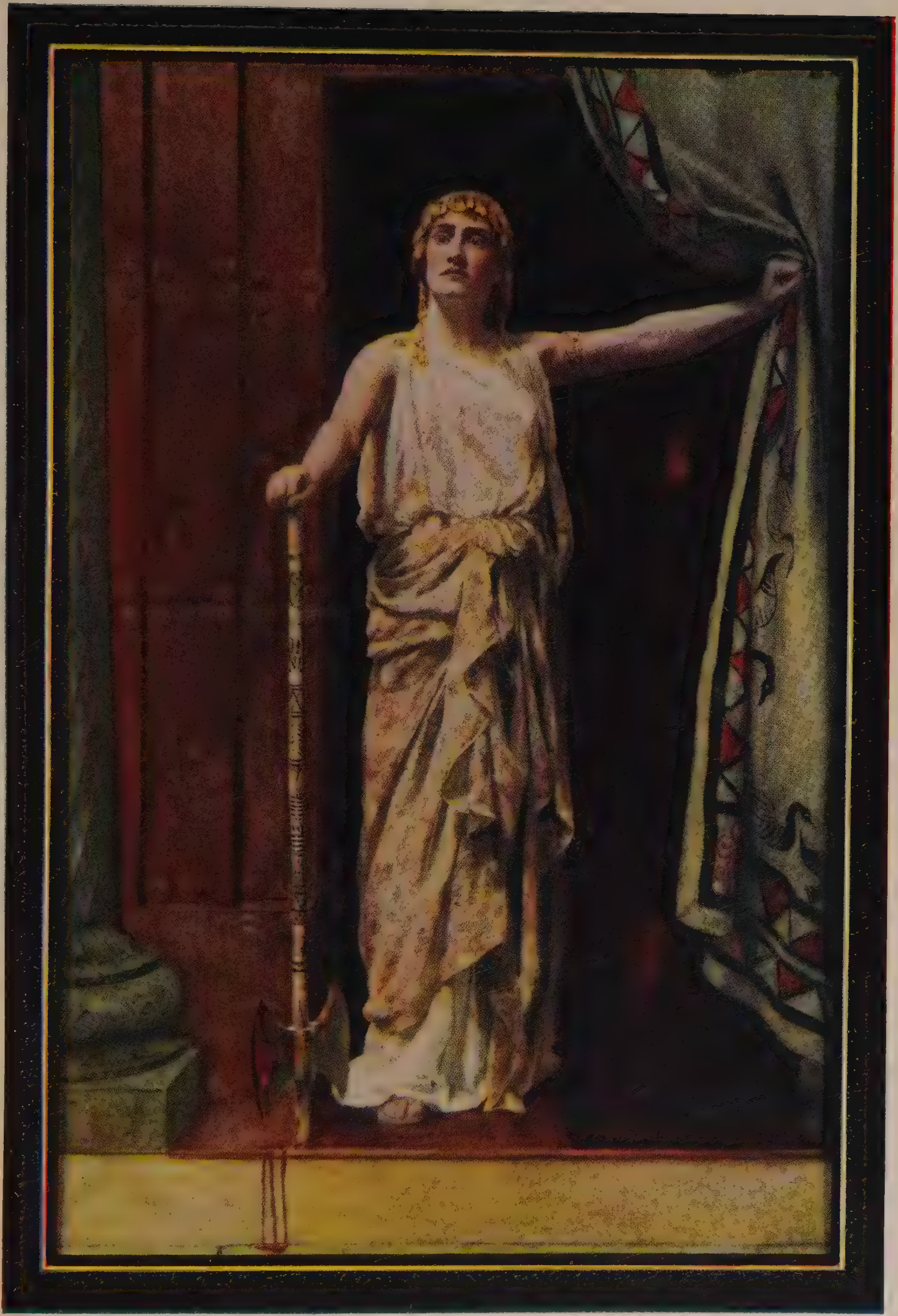

Photo: Henry Dixon & Son.

CLYTEMNESTRA

FROM A PAINTING BY THE HON. JOHN COLLIER

The ruthless wife of Agamemnon who is one of the great figures of the Tragedies of Æschylus

were the basis of the plays of Æschylus. The age of faith had passed. Euripides was compelled to use the elaborate method of the Greek stage, but he chose men and women, not gods, for his dramatis personæ, and, for this reason, he is regarded as the father of romantic drama.

While in many respects the poet was out of tune with his age, he shared its scepticism. His unbelief had a moral basis. To him, the legends were immoral. If they were true, then gods were worthy of neither worship nor respect. If they were untrue, the whole fabric of the ancient Greek religion fell to pieces. He was tolerant of the ancestor worship, common in ancient Greece as in China. He appears to have had no definite belief or disbelief in immortality, nor was he able to accept the existence of "the eternal, not ourselves, making for righteousness." Aristophanes called him an atheist, and the charge was not unjust. But he insists that the absence of belief in God or the gods does not affect morality. Remember that Euripides was a Greek. To him virtue was attractive because it was beautiful. Apart altogether from any consideration of rewards or punishments, happiness or unhappiness, virtue was to be followed and admired for the sake of its beauty.

In the plays of Euripides, there is an acute analysis of character, particularly of the character of women, and this complete understanding of women caused Mr. Gilbert Murray to call the poet "the classic Ibsen."

The Plays of Euripides

Euripides wrote at least seventy-five plays, of which eighteen are in existence. Perhaps the best known of them, the *Medea*, has been described by Mr. Gilbert Murray as a tragedy of character and situation. It is one of the poet's earliest works, and it expresses the youth of a writer who is "a sceptic and a devotee of truth." The story of Jason and Medea has been partly told in these pages. The play begins when Jason has grown weary of his sorceress mistress, and has married the only daughter of the king of Corinth. Jason has become a middle-aged man, weary of a hectic love affair and intent only on his career. Medea is now a woman "sullen-eyed and hot with hate." For his daughter's sake the king of Corinth banishes her from the city, allowing her one day's grace before she need leave. In a bitter scene with Jason she upbraids him for his ingratitude. It was she who had helped him to gain the Golden Fleece; it was she who had saved his life; it was she who had killed his usurping uncle Pelias; and at the end of her upbraiding the leader of the Chorus comments:

> Dire and beyond all healing is the hate
> When hearts that loved are turned to enmity.

Jason is resentful, as men always are under the lashes of a woman's tongue:

> Would to God
> We mortals by some other seed could raise
> Our fruits, and no blind women block our ways!

Medea is not the woman to be slighted with impunity, and she plans a complete and horrible revenge. To her rival she will send a deadly gift:

> Fine robings and a carcanet of gold,
> Which raiment let her once but take and fold
> About her, a foul death that girl shall die,
> And all who touch her in her agony.

But even this will not satisfy Medea. Jason must be left, not only wifeless, but childless. To wound her faithless lover she will kill her own children:

> For never child of mine shall Jason see
> Hereafter living, never shall beget
> From his new bride.

In a second interview with Jason she pretends that she is ready to submit to her fate and, when she catches sight of her children, she bursts into tears and, for a few minutes, becomes human.

> Ah! wondrous hopes my poor heart had in you,
> How you would tend me in my age, and do
> The shroud about me with your own dear hands,
> When I lay cold.

But the melting mood soon passes. She rejoices when she hears of the death of the king's daughter, and she determines that her children must die too. She must not tarry in winning the "crown of dire inevitable sin," and the children are hurried to their death. Jason is told of Medea's intention, and frantically endeavours to save his children's lives. He batters at the door of Medea's house, but the children are already dead, and, appearing on the roof of her chariot of winged dragons on which are the children's bodies, she prophesies the fate which is awaiting Jason himself:

> For thee, behold, death draweth on,
> Evil and lonely, like thine heart: the hands
> Of thine old Argo, rotting where she stands,
> Shall smite thine head in twain, and bitter be
> To the last end thy memories of me.

The moral is that to do evil is to contrive suffering. Jason behaved to Medea with base ingratitude. His bad action brought horrible results, not only to himself but to others, while Medea sorrowfully proclaimed herself the victim of her own hard heart. The punishment may seem grotesquely excessive, but that often happens in life, and Euripides insists that, excessive or not, punishment inevitably follows sin, the bill must be paid. To live morally is to live beautifully. To live immorally is to live dangerously, wrong doing always leading to disaster.

Aristotle lauded the genius of Euripides, and when he died Sophocles, an artist incapable of jealousy, with all the citizens put on mourning. With his death the great age of Greek drama came to an end.

§ 6

Aristophanes, a contemporary of the tragic poets, was the supreme master of Greek comedy, which in his hands was a mixture of romanticism and topical jokes, the expression of a desire to get away in the manner, let us say, of Sir James Barrie from the pressure of the realities of the moment, combined with the high-spirited but effervescent buffoonery which nowadays is associated with the music-hall. Aristophanes may be compared with a modern writer of French revues. His plays are witty comments on the follies and foibles of his time.

Aristophanes

Aristophanes was born in 448 B.C. Little is known of the details of his life, and of his fifty-four comedies only eleven have been preserved. Aristophanes was conservative, hating wars, democracy, and "intellectuals." He gibed at warmongers, demagogues, philosophers, and lawyers. In his gay moods he writes with a charm that, as has been well said, has a genuine Shakespearean flavour, as witness this Chorus from his comedy *The Frogs.*

The translation is again by Mr. Gilbert Murray:

Then on 'mid the meadows deep,
Where thickest the rosebuds creep
  And the dewdrops are pearliest:
A jubilant step advance
In our own, our eternal dance,
Till its joy the Glad Fates entrance
  Who threaded it earliest.

For ours is the sunshine bright,
Yes, ours is the joy of light,
  All pure, without danger:
For we thine Elect have been,
Thy secrets our eyes have seen,
And our hearts we have guarded clean
  Toward kinsman and stranger!

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

HERODOTUS

The Greek Historian.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

DEMOSTHENES

The Greek Orator

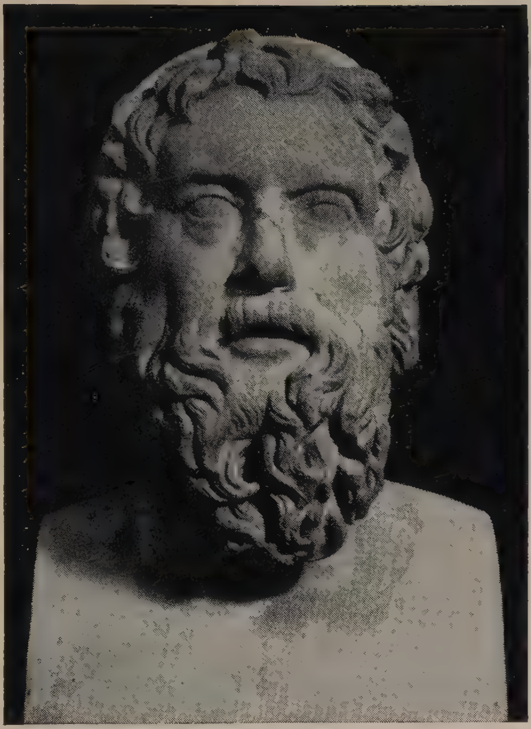

Photo: Anderson.

ARISTOPHANES

The Capitol, Rome.

The Greek writer of Comedies.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

PLATO

The Greek Philosopher.

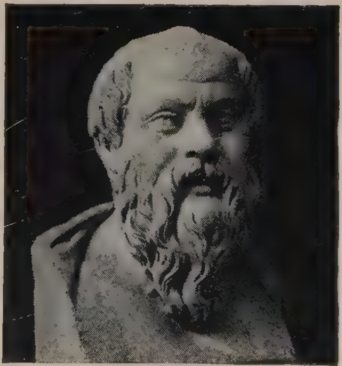

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

SOCRATES

The Founder of Classic Philosophy.

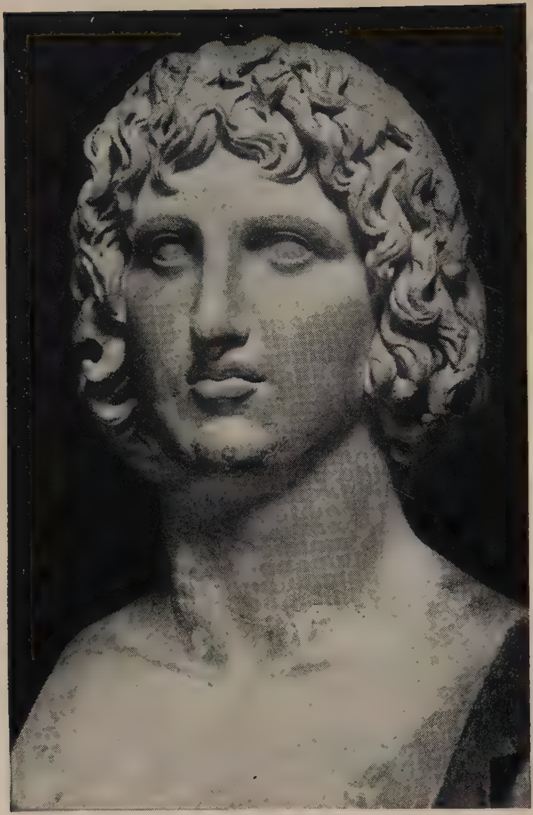

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

VIRGIL

Bust in the Capitol, Rome.

The Author of the "Æneid" and the greatest of Latin epic poets.

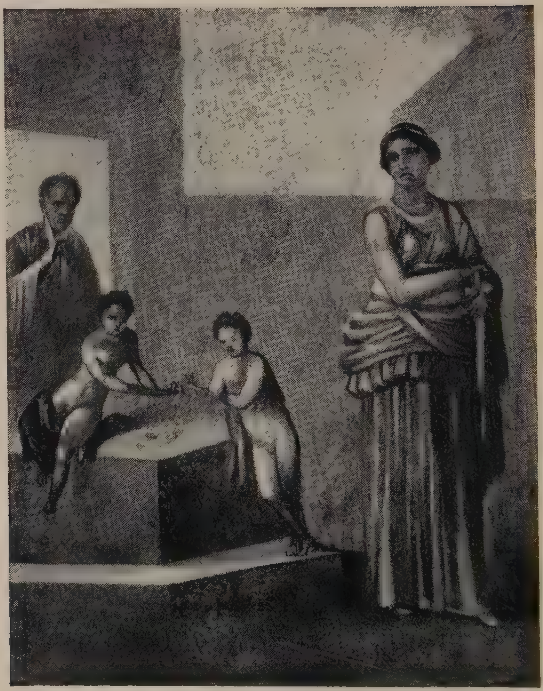

Photo: Brogi.

MEDEA MEDITATING THE MURDER OF HER CHILDREN

Medea helped Jason to recover the Golden Fleece and went back with him to Greece. In his tragedy, Euripides tells how Jason grew weary of her and how she first killed the daughter of the king of Corinth, whom he intended to marry, and afterwards earned "the crown of dire inevitable sin" by killing her own children.

§ 7

Sappho and the Greek Anthology

The most interesting and important of the few remnants of Greek lyric poetry that have come down to us are the work of Sappho, the poetess, who lived on the island of Lesbos some hundred and fifty years before the time of the Greek dramatists. She was held by the Greeks in as high regard as Homer himself, being variously referred to as the "Tenth Muse" and the "Flower of the Graces." Only one of her lyrics, the "Hymn to Aphrodite," exists in its entirety, but some fragments of her writing have been discovered in recent years written on Egyptian papyri. J. A. Symonds says that the world has suffered no greater loss than the loss of Sappho's poems. The Greek critics, who were lucky enough to read them, claimed every line as perfect, and the fragments that are left to us justify the assertion that Sappho's writing was distinguished by an absolutely inimitable grace. Two of her epigrams are preserved in the Greek Anthology.

Here is one written for a fisherman's grave:

> To Pelagon Meniscus gave
> This oar and basket for his grave,
> That those who pass his tomb might see
> How small a fisher's wealth can be.

The Greek Anthology has a curious and interesting history. It was originally a collection of epigrams compiled about the year 200 B.C. The Greeks used to write verses on their temples and tombs and public buildings, and it was from these verses that the first Anthology was composed. Other collections of lyric poetry and later epigrams were made at various times from the year 60 B.C. until the sixth century A.D., when the whole of these compilations were published in seven books, which were revised and re-arranged by a Constantinople scholar in the tenth century. A copy of this last collection was discovered by chance in the

Palatine Library at Heidelberg in the year 1606, and was presented to Pope Gregory the Fifteenth in 1623. It is still in the Vatican Library.

The verses, as J. A. Symonds has said, introduce us to the minutest facts of private life in Greece from the earliest classic times to the decadent days of the Eastern Empire. Many English poets have translated some or other of these exquisite verses. Perhaps the best-known translation is Shelley's version of Plato's epitaph for his friend Aster:

> Thou wert the morning star among the living
>   Ere thy fair light had fled;
> Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus giving
>   New splendour to the dead.

§ 8

The Greek Orators and Historians

So far as prose writing is concerned, the things that mainly preoccupied the ancients were oratory, history, and philosophy. Demosthenes the Athenian was the most famous of all Greek orators. He was eager for a united Greece with Athens, not as a tyrant, but as a single-minded leader and inspirer. He opposed all hazardous adventures. He attacked corruption. In a dozen respects he proved himself a long-sighted cautious statesman. Always he pitted himself against Philip of Macedon, denouncing his plots against Hellenic liberty in the series of famous speeches known as the Philippics.

The Greek historians best known to us are Xenophon, a general turned war correspondent, Herodotus, and Thucydides. Herodotus, the "father of history," wrote just after Athenian civilisation had been delivered from the fear of the Persians. He was not content to describe the immediate forces which led to the great campaign which resulted in the Greek victories of Marathon and Salamis, but further back still into the history of Egypt, about which he could only guess.

Thucydides wrote after the great internal struggle in Greece which brought about the downfall of the Athenian Empire, and with its downfall the end of Greek classical literature. His history of the Peloponnesian war is conceived not so much as a record as a work of art. We get a picture of the triumph of Athens and her gradual leadership of a group of island states, of the rise to power and the unchallenged eminence of Pericles, and of all those elements in the policy of Pericles and of the city state which he ruled which were the seeds of future disaster.

The great Greek biographer, Plutarch, though writing in Greek, wrote under the Roman Empire and within the Christian era. His *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* had probably more influence on modern thought when the classics came to be studied again at the Renaissance than any other single book. In the translation by Sir Thomas North they were the source of Shakespeare's Roman plays. They gave the impulse to the practice of biography in England which began with the books we have just mentioned, and they have been a constant inspiration to moralists and statesmen. Probably no book except the Bible had a stronger influence in England in Elizabethan times.

§ 9

Plato

The dominating figure in Athens at the end of the fifth century B.C. was the philosopher, Socrates, the son of a stonemason, and himself "a clumsy and slovenly figure." The dominating figures in the opening years of the fourth century were Plato, the pupil of Socrates, and Aristotle. Socrates was never able to write, and his teachings have been preserved in Plato's "Dialogues," though it remains doubtful how much of the philosophy is the master's and how much the pupil's. Plato lived to be eighty. Except for two visits to Sicily, where he endeavoured, with tragic failure, to put his political theories into practice, he lived his long life in Athens, teaching philosophy in the shaded portico of his Academy, which was pleasantly situated in a public park a mile outside the city gates. Among his pupils was Aristotle, afterwards the tutor of Alexander the Great, who in later years had his own school at Athens at the Lyceum. Aristotle was the father of modern science. But neither with Aristotle's science nor with the philosophy of Socrates and Plato is this OUTLINE concerned.

Plato was, however, also a great literary artist with the characteristic Greek love of beauty and of life. His writings consist of the early *Dialogues,* the *Republic,* the first description of Utopia ever written, and the *Laws,* in which *he* developed his political teaching.

The fundamental ideas of the *Republic,* the most famous of Plato's books, is that the good man can only exist in the good state. In Plato's time the old Greek devotion to the state, to service for the commonweal, had degenerated into self-seeking. Rulers had grown corrupt. Politicians thought only of the "spoils." And with corruption had come ignorance. The leaders of the people were blind and selfish. The first essential was that the rulers should be educated, properly prepared for their positions. Children should be taught to love beauty and hate ugliness, and to "recognise and welcome reason." And since beauty and knowledge are the substance of God, the end of Plato's idea of education was the realisation of God and the service of man.

But even the educated may deteriorate. A youth may be trained for service only to become the slave of self-seeking. So for his governing class Plato proposed the abolition of the family and of private property, both calculated, he contended, to encourage exclusiveness and selfishness. Plato was a eugenist. The state was to regulate the association of the sexes, and to look after children immediately after birth. Mothers and fathers were not even to know their own children, lest favouritism and unequal treatment should prevail and all the children of each generation were to be brought up as brothers and sisters. It must be remembered that Plato was only thinking of the creation of an ideal ruling caste. He had no thought for the mass of the people, who were to be left with their own goods, their own families, and without his idealistic education. He was dreaming of a people's aristocracy. It should be added that the theories propounded in the *Republic* were severely criticised by Aristotle. They are far away from the tracts of modern socialism, and they are, to some extent, kin to the philosophy of Nietzsche.

Plato's quality as a writer is exhibited in his wonderful description of the death of Socrates in the *Phædo*. The old philosopher was, it will be remembered, condemned in the year 399 B.C. to drink a draught of deadly hemlock on the trumped-up charge that he had corrupted the youth of Athens. Plato says:

> Soon the jailor, who was the servant of the Eleven, entered and stood by him, saying: "To you, Socrates, whom I know to be the noblest and gentlest and best of all who ever came to this place, I will not impute the angry feelings of other men, who rage and swear at me when, in obedience to the authorities, I bid them drink the poison—indeed, I am sure that you will not be angry with me; for others, as you are aware, and not I, are the guilty cause. And so fare you well, and try to bear lightly what must needs be; you know my errand." Then bursting into tears he turned away and went out.
>
> Socrates looked at him and said: "I return your good wishes, and will do as you bid." Then turning to us, he said: "How charming the man is! since I have been in prison he has always been coming to see me, and at times he would talk to me, and was as good as could be to me, and now see how generously he sorrows for me. But we must do, as he says, Crito; let the cup be brought, if the poison is prepared: if not, let the attendant prepare some."
>
> "Yet," said Crito, "the sun is still upon the hilltops, and many a one has taken the draught late, and after the announcement has been made to him he has eaten and drunk,

and indulged in sensual delights; do not hasten, then, there is still time."

Socrates said: "Yes, Crito, and they of whom you speak are right in doing thus, for they think that they will gain by the delay; but I am right in not doing thus, for I do not think that I should gain anything by drinking the poison a little later; I should be sparing and saving a life which is already gone: I could only laugh at myself for this. Please, then, to do as I say, and not refuse me."

Crito, when he heard this, made a sign to the servant, and the servant went in, and remained for some time, and then returned with the jailer carrying a cup of poison. Socrates said: "You, my good friend, who are experienced in these matters, shall give me directions how I am to proceed." The man answered: "You have only to walk about until your legs are heavy, and then to lie down, and the poison will act." At the same time he handed the cup to Socrates, who in the easiest and gentlest manner, without the least fear or change of colour or feature, looking at the man with all his eyes, Echecrates, as his manner was, took the cup and said: "What do you say about making a libation out of this cup to any god? May I, or not?" The man answered: "We only prepare, Socrates, just so much as we deem enough." "I understand," he said; "yet I may and must pray to the gods to prosper my journey from this to that other world—may this, then, which is my prayer, be granted to me." Then holding the cup to his lips, quite readily and cheerfully he drank off the poison. And hitherto most of us had been able to control our sorrow; but now when we saw him drinking, and saw too that he had finished the draught, we could no longer forbear, and in spite of myself my own tears were flowing fast; so that I covered my face and wept over myself, for certainly I was not weeping over him, but at the thought of my own calamity in having lost such a companion. Nor was I the first, for Crito, when he found himself unable to restrain his tears, had got up and moved away, and I followed; and at that moment, Apollodorus, who had been weeping all the time, broke out in a loud cry which made cowards of us all.

"SAPPHO," BY SIR LAWRENCE ALMA-TADEMA, R.A.

The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung.
BYRON.

Sappho and her pupils lived together on the island of Lesbos.

Photo: Anderson.

SAPPHO

National Museum, Naples.

The great Greek woman poet.

Photo Rischgitz Collection.

"SCHOOL OF ATHENS," BY RAPHAEL

Vatican.

Plato had a school of philosophy on the shaded terrace of the grove of Academus, outside Athens.

Socrates alone retained his calmness: "What is this strange outcry?" he said. "I sent away the women mainly in order that they might not offend in this way, for I have heard that a man should die in peace. Be quiet, then, and have patience."

When we heard that, we were ashamed, and refrained our tears; and he walked about until, as he said, his legs began to fail, and then he lay on his back, according to the directions, and the man who gave him the poison now and then looked at his feet and legs; and after a while he pressed his foot hard and asked him if he could feel; and he said, "No"; and then his leg, and so upwards and upwards, and showed us that he was cold and stiff. And he felt them himself, and said: "When the poison reaches the heart, that will be the end." He was beginning to grow cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face, for he had covered himself up, and said (they were his last words)—he said: "Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius; will you remember to pay the debt?" "The debt shall be paid," said Crito; "is there anything else?" There was no answer to this question; but in a minute or two a movement was heard, and the attendants uncovered him; his eyes were set, and Crito closed his eyes and mouth.

Such was the end, Echecrates, of our friend, whom I may truly call the wisest, and justest, and best of all the men whom I have ever known.

§ 10

No two peoples were ever more unlike than the Greeks and the Romans. The Greeks were essentially artists, loving beauty, caring for all that made the individual life dignified and happy. They were intellectually adventurous, inquisitive in speculation, and daring in the profession of their beliefs. The Romans, on the other hand, were eminently practical and unimaginative; their genius was for war and politics, and their chief concern was for order and commercial prosperity. Wherever the Roman armies went they carried law and built roads.

Contrasting his countrymen with the Greeks, Virgil summarised the work of the Romans when he wrote in the "Æneid":

Others, belike, with happier grace
From bronze or stone shall call the face,
Plead doubtful causes, map the skies,
And tell when planets set or rise;
But, Roman, thou—do thou control
  The nations far and wide,
Be this thy genius, to impose
The rule of peace on vanquished foes,
Show pity to the humbled soul,
  And crush the sons of pride.

The Romans had a genius for administration and colonisation, propitiating the peoples whom they conquered by the justice of their government and by their splendid scheme of recognising every man born in a province occupied by the Roman legions as a Roman citizen.

The Roman Spirit

The history of Greece, so far as we know it, begins with a magnificent literary achievement. Homer was the first of the Greeks. But although we know what happened in Rome so long ago as the eighth century before Christ, there was no Roman literature until six hundred years later—there was no Roman literature, indeed, until the Romans came into intimate contact with Greek civilisation. Early in the third century B.C., after the first war with Carthage, the Romans conquered the island of Sicily, which had been colonised by the Greeks centuries before. The evidence of Greek culture exists to this day in Sicily, and at Taormina and at Syracuse there are far more complete Greek theatres than there can be found anywhere in Greece itself. After the conquest of Sicily, Greek scholars and artists settled in Rome, and the Romans, then a rude people with no art, no literature, and with the baldest and most unimaginative of religions, were dazzled and fascinated by a culture of which they learned for the first time.

Latin literature began with the translation of the "Odyssey" in the third century B.C., and afterwards of the Greek tragedies by Greek slaves in the service of Roman masters. Again, under the influence of the Greeks, the Romans began to build theatres, imitating Athenian models, but building of wood instead of stone, and using the orchestra, where the Greek chorus was placed, for the seats of the senators and other important persons. The plays produced in these early Roman theatres were comedies based on the Greek, and often translations of the comic dramatists who followed Aristophanes in Athens.

The first important writer of Latin comedies was Plautus, whose writings belong to the end of the third century and the beginning of the second century B.C. He wrote in all a hundred and thirty plays, of which twenty are still in existence. They are strangely like modern French farces, the fun being derived from foolish fathers, spendthrift sons, jealous husbands, cunning slaves, and traffickers in all sorts of vice. Plautus was followed by Terence, who was born in Carthage, and brought to Rome as a slave. Nearly all the plays of Terence were adaptations from the Greek, and are instinct with the essentially Greek idea that conduct should be based on reason, and consideration should accompany authority. Terence died in 149 B.C. Subsequently Roman writers agreed in eulogising the purity of his Latin style.

The Romans were never able to write tragedy at all comparable with the magnificence of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Ennius, a contemporary of Terence, who is sometimes called the father of Roman poetry, boasted that the soul of Homer had migrated into him through a peacock. But there is no evidence in his epics or in his tragedies that this was a fact.

Roughly it may be said that there was no Latin literature of outstanding importance until the first century B.C. That was the Golden Age of Rome, so far as letters are concerned, as the fifth century B.C. was the Golden Age of Athens. It was the century of Cicero and Cæsar, Horace and Virgil, Livy, Ovid, Catullus, and Lucretius, the age in which nine-tenths of the Latin literature that has come down to us was produced. This century saw the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Empire. It was the time of Rome's greatest material prosperity and glory. Her legions had marched east and west, north and south, carrying their eagles into Asia, to the borders of the African desert, to the banks of the Danube, through Spain, Italy, and England. Rome was the first world-empire, and it was when Rome was at the very apex of her glory that her literature was produced. The same thing happened in Greece, for, as has already been shown, the Greek drama followed the Athenian defeat of the Persians.

§ 11

Virgil

Virgil, who was born in 70 B.C. and died in 19 B.C., was the most patriotic of all Roman writers. He loved Italy as Shakespeare loved England. His father was a small farmer, and he was brought up in the country, retaining through his life a deep love of country life and the Spartan peasant virtues. His "Eclogues," a series of pastoral poems, were begun in his country home and finished in Rome when he was thirty-three. Seven years later he completed the "Georgics," in which, at the suggestion of Mæcenas, the Roman millionaire who loved to be the patron of poets, he described the year's work of the Italian farmer.

The "Georgics" is a poem of masterly beauty and finish. It is a glorification of the labour of the fields, but it is more than that. Virgil, the farmer's son, idealises the work of husbandry with knowledge and sympathy, and Virgil, the nature-lover, revels in the varied splendour of the world. Sunshine and storm, summer stars and winter floods, comets and eclipses, all delight the poet, whose muse can also joy in peaceful scenes of crops and pasture lands. For wild animals he has a strong attraction, and it has been well said that for those who have lived close to nature, particularly in southern lands, no other book possesses the charm of the "Georgics."

Virgil's great poem the "Æneid" was finished in 19 B.C. He left instructions that the manuscript should be destroyed—it was his intention to devote three more years to polishing the poem—but his wish was overruled by order of the Emperor Augustus. In the "Æneid" Virgil set out to write a poem which should explain to the people of the time in which he lived their origin and the reasons for their existence. The "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" gave the Greek peoples all round the fringes of the Mediterranean a story of their origin which satisfied and even excited them. The Romans, who had gradually won political dominance over all the places where Greek legends were current, had themselves, except for the trivial story of Romulus and Remus symbolised for them by the bronze figure of the wolf in the Capitol, nothing in the past to which they could attach themselves.

A National Story

Virgil provided Rome in the "Æneid," his Homeric epic, with a national story, beautifully told, full of the cultured excellences of a man using a language which had reached at the moment the pitch of literary perfection, and with just enough relation to the currently known legends of Greece to win a polite, if not a sincere, acceptance from the readers of the time.

Æneas, the hero of the epic, is one of the Trojan heroes. After the capture of Troy by the Greeks, he makes a long seven years' voyage westward, eventually landing at Carthage on the North coast of Africa. The first lines of Dryden's translation of the "Æneid" indicate the heroic note of the poem:

> Arms and the man I sing, who, forc'd by fate,
> And haughty Juno's unrelenting hate,
> Expell'd and exil'd, left the Trojan shore.

Dido, the queen of Carthage, falls in love with Æneas, who tells her the story of the fall of Troy. In this story Virgil narrates, for the first time, the legend of the wooden horse, in which on the advice of the sage Nestor the Greeks hid themselves and thus contrived to enter the city.

Æneas is warned by the gods not to stay in Carthage, and he prepares secretly to depart. Dido discovers his intention, and when she finds that all her persuasion and cajolery cannot alter his purpose, she stabs herself with the hero's sword.

It is in the sixth book that Virgil links the Trojan with the city that the poet loved. Æneas lands on the western shore of Italy and hurries to the cavern of the Sibyl. He tells the prophetess that he is bound for Hades to see the face of his sire, Anchises, and with her as his guide he descends to the shadowy homes of the dead. "Now, man thyself, Æneas, and follow me."

They are ferried across the Styx by Charon, the gloomy ferryman, passing the realms of despair, haunted by phantoms and monsters, where Æneas sees many of the heroes of the Trojan War, and where he meets Queen Dido, hate burning unquenchable in her eyes. At last they reach Elysium, where Æneas's father reveals to him the future glory of his race. He bids him behold the spirits of his descendants, the Romans that are to be, "the breed of heroes" destined to return to earth to fill the world with their glory. Leaving the land of Spirits, Æneas arrives at the mouth of the Tiber. He is welcomed by Latinus, king of the Laurentines, whose daughter Æneas marries, and founds a fabled city—and thus the poet involves the mythical origin of Rome.

The charm of the "Æneid" lies in its deep reverence for the old gods, the old spirit, and the old glory of Rome. The characters themselves have little of the heroic attraction of Homer's creations, for Virgil generally lacked the gift of endowing his characters with vivid humanity. Dido is his greatest success. In the fourth book of the "Æneid" she is one of the most living and

Photo: Braun.

"DEATH OF SOCRATES," BY DAVID

The story of this great episode is told by Plato.

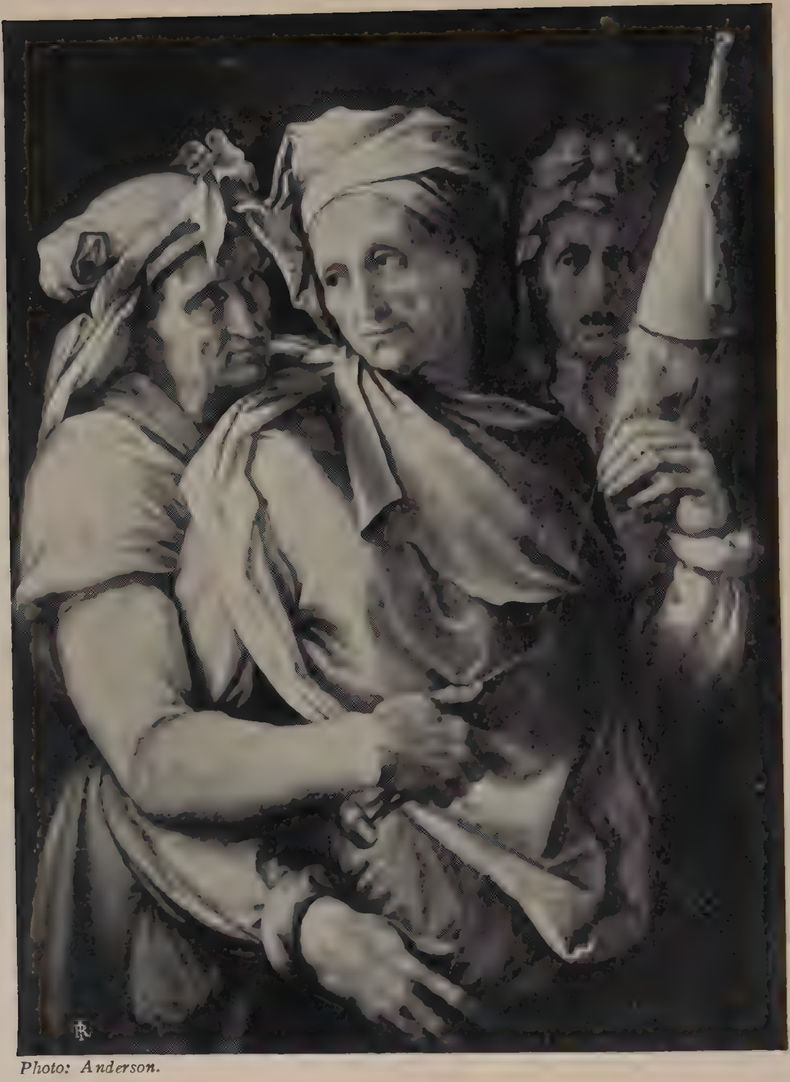

Photo: Anderson.

"THE FATES," BY MICHAEL ANGELO

Pitti Gallery, Florence.

The names of the Fates were Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos. The first spun the fates of men, the second apportioned them, and the third cut them off. They presided over birth as well as death, and the gods, as well as men, were subject to them. The note of Greek tragedy is that man is helpless in the hands of these Fates. This conception was borrowed to some extent by the Romans, to whom the Fates were also "lords above lords and gods behind gods."

warm-blooded women in poetry, and her story is the first and one of the greatest pieces of romantic writing in the world. She appears to Æneas a vision of dignity and loveliness:

> The beauteous Dido, with a num'rous train
> And pomp of guards, ascends the sacred fane.
> Such on Eurotas' banks, or Cynthus' height,
> Diana seems; and so she charms the sight,
> When in the dance the graceful goddess leads
> The choir of nymphs, and overtops their heads:
> Known by her quiver, and her lofty mien,
> She walks majestic, and she looks their queen;
> Latona sees her shine above the rest,
> And feeds with secret joy her silent breast.
> Such Dido was; with such becoming state,
> Amidst the crowd, she walks serenely great.
> Their labour to her future sway she speeds,
> And passing with a gracious glance proceeds;
> Then mounts the throne, high plac'd before the shrine:
> In crowds around, the swarming people join.
> She takes petitions, and dispenses laws,
> Hears and determines every private cause;
> Their tasks in equal portions she divides,
> And where unequal, there by lots decides.

Virgil was buried in Naples. The poet was a tall, dark, handsome man, of a modest and gentle disposition, silent, diffident, and religious, living a quiet life, loving his friends and loving his country. No great writer has ever been held in deeper affection by his contemporaries, and his fame in his own country and his own time has never been dimmed. The scholars of the Middle Ages knew his writings as they knew the Bible and the copious writings of the Fathers of the Church. The Renaissance gave him an even wider appreciation. When Shakespeare made Jessica say:

> In such a night
> Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
> Upon the wild sea banks and waft her love
> To come again to Carthage,

he was writing in a spirit steeped in Virgilian influence. A part of the permanence of Virgil's influence (though this would not have affected Shakespeare) was due to a misunderstanding of one of his poems. In the fourth section of the "Eclogues" there is a passage widely taken by the early Christians to be a prophecy on the part of the poet of the birth of Christ:

Come are those last days that the Sybil sang:
The ages' mighty march begins anew.
Now comes the virgin, Saturn reigns again:
Now from high heaven descends a wondrous race.
Thou on the newborn babe—who first shall end
That age of iron, bid a golden dawn
Upon the broad world—chaste Lucina, smile:

. . . . . .

On thee, child, everywhere shall earth, untilled,
Show'r, her first baby-offerings, vagrant stems
Of ivy, foxglove, and gay briar, and bean;
Unbid the goats shall come big-uddered home,
Nor monstrous lions scare the herded kine.
Thy cradle shall be full of pretty flowers:
Die must the serpent, treacherous poison-plants
Must die; and Syria's roses spring like weeds.

Virgil became then, in a sense, one of the forerunners of the Christian religion, and the honour which was paid to him in this respect remains for ever in the circumstance that Dante in "The Divine Comedy" made Virgil his guide through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven.

§ 12

Quintus Horatius Flaccus—universally named as Horace—of all the Roman classics is the most loved and quoted. He is the most companionable. When Voltaire called him the best of preachers, he meant that he preached not from a pulpit but in the friendliest way at your shoulder. It has been said of him, "He probed every wound with so gentle a hand that the patient smiled under the operation."

Horace

He is the best fellow to go a walk with, unfailing in hours of vacancy or discomfort, always ready to give you a felicitous phrase or a flash of tender wit to carry off your mood. It is not his part to exalt the deeds of heroes, as did Virgil, or to unfold the mysteries of the Universe like Lucretius, or to "treat of Fate, and Chance, and change in human life," in the ways of the Greek tragedians; he is the tactful and intimate adviser who puts in his word when he sees it will be helpful. As Pope has it:

> Horace still charms with graceful negligence,
> And without method talks us into sense,
> Will, like a friend, familiarly convey
> The truest notions in the easiest way.

Ruskin, writing to an inquirer on Bible-reading, boldly said:

> The best message for any of your young men who really are trying to read their Bibles is—whatever they first chance to read, on any morning. But here's a Pagan passage for them, which will be a grandly harmonised bass for them for whatsoever words they get on the New Year.

The passage he referred to was Horace's in his Epistle to Albius Tibullus, which Conington renders:

> Let hopes and sorrows, fears and angers be,
> And think each day that dawns the last you'll see;
> For so the hour that greets you unforseen
> Will bring with it enjoyment twice as keen.

Horace died just eight years before the Christian era. He was sprung from the people. His father, indeed, had been a slave, and as a freedman he rose no higher than to be a kind of commission agent at auctions. Yet to him Horace owed everything. After leaving school in Rome he finished his education at Athens, and was there when the news came of the assassination of Julius Cæsar. When Brutus and Cassius arrived to take command of the Roman provinces in the East, Horace and his fellow-students were swept into the campaign which failed at Philippi. Although then over twenty-two he impressed Brutus and received the command of a legion. But this episode was foreign to his character and career. It must have advanced him socially, however, when, on returning to Rome under the amnesty proclaimed by Octavius, he became a civil servant. He began to make distinguished friends, and his career was established when Virgil introduced him to the wealthy and cultured Mæcenas, the friend and chief adviser of Augustus, whose name is synonymous with generous patronage of men of letters. In the train of Mæcenas he went to Brundusium, the modern Brindisi, and his account of the journey is one of the most natural and vivid glimpses of Roman life and habits that we possess. It contains also a delightful reference to his meeting with his friend and fellow-poet, Virgil:

> What hand-shaking! While sense abides,
> A friend to me is worth the world besides.

Although he had fought for the Republican party, he gained the complete confidence of his new friends, and when Mæcenas presented to him a small estate in the valley of Ustica it was accepted by him with manly grace and gratitude. There is no more famous gift in literary history.

In this Sabine retreat—the little farm thirty miles from Rome, his own to enjoy—Horace fulfilled his dream of poetic retirement. Here he lived the simple life, watched the Roman world go by, invoked the Muse, cultivated his fields, and had his friends to spend a few days with him as often as he could persuade them to turn their backs on the smoke, noise, and vices of Rome. And these friends, who included great soldiers, courtiers, men of affairs, and many humbler folk, loved Horace for his friendly candour about the lives they were living and the ambitions that were costing them so much in health and peace of mind.

In counselling them he counsels us all. His gospel is that of self-restraint, reasonable ambitions, contentment, and the enjoyment of life from day to day. Is his young friend, Licinius Murena, becoming giddy with success, and eager for violent political acts? Horace, in one of his most famous odes, counsels him (the translation is by Sir Stephen E. De Vere):

Tempt not the deep; nor while you fly
The storm, Licinius, steer too nigh
The breakers on the rocky shore;
Hold fast, contented evermore,
The way of Peace, the Golden Mean:
That bounded space which lies between
The sordid hut and palace hall.

He is always trying to abate the "will to live" in his friends when he sees that it is controlling them instead of being controlled. He pleads with his patron Mæcenas to leave the joyless feasts of Rome, and its sweltering heat, for the peace and coolness of the country:

Happy the man, and he alone,
  Who master of himself can say,
To-day at least hath been my own,
  For I have clearly liv'd to-day:
Then let to-morrow's cloud arise,
Or purer suns o'erspread the cheerful skies.

PHILIP FRANCIS.

Horace's touch is so light, and his address so intimate, that he can warn a friend in the height of his prosperity that he will have to die and leave all. He does this repeatedly, as in the deathless ode to Postumus ("Eheu fugaces Postume, Postume"):

In vain shall we war's bloody conflict shun,
And the hoarse scudding gale
Of Adriatic seas,
Or fly the southern breeze,
That through the Autumn hours wafts pestilence and bale.

For all must view Cocytus' pitchy tide
Meandering slow, and see
The accursed Danaids' moil,
And that dread stone recoil,
Sad Sisyphus is doomed to heave eternally.

Land, home, and winsome wife must all be left
And cypresses abhorred,
Alone of all the trees
That now your fancy please,
Shall shade his dust, who was a little while their lord.
Sir Theodore Martin.

Such exhortations are but the foil to his delightful, if very pagan, calls to love and wine and roses, and his rallyings of coquettes like Lydia, Pyrrha, Chloe, Glycera, Lyde, and the rest. In this vein nothing is more dainty than his counsel to the too anxious Leuconoé, who had been dabbling in the occult—trying to learn her destiny from Babylonish oracles. He advises here, as he advises every young woman still, to avoid all such nonsense:

Far wiser is it to endure
Those ills of life we cannot cure.
What though this winter, that exhausts
The Tyrrhene surge on shattered coasts
Should be the last for thee and me?
It matters not, Leuconoé!
Fill high the goblet! Envious Time
Steals, as we speak, our fleeting prime.
Away with hope! Away with sorrow!
Snatch thou To-day, nor trust To-morrow.
Sir Stephen E. De Vere.

Countless modern poets have exhausted their art in trying to give the spirit of these effusions in English verse, but though

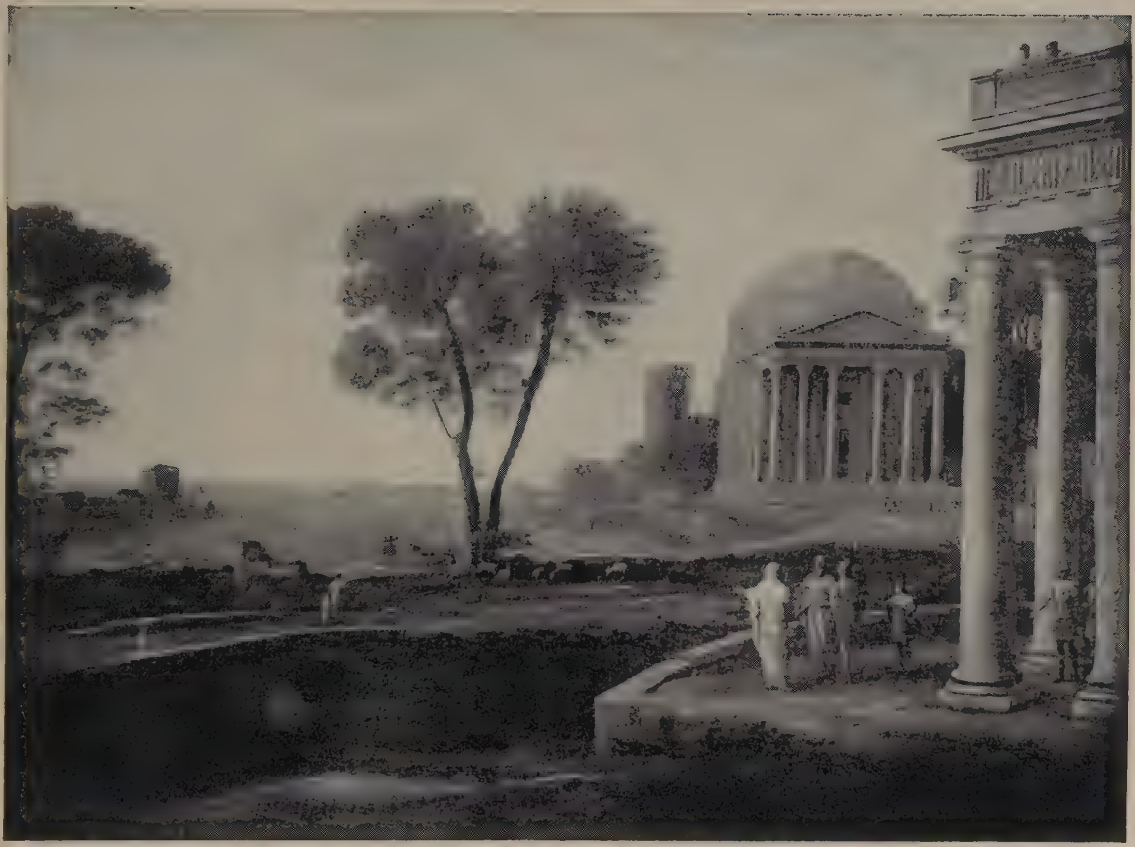

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"ÆNEAS AT DELOS," BY CLAUDE

National Gallery, London.

Photo: Anderson.

"HORACE," BY RAPHAEL

Rome.

The Latin poet who has most affected modern minds.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

OVID

The Latin poet who retells the classic myths in his "Metamorphoses."

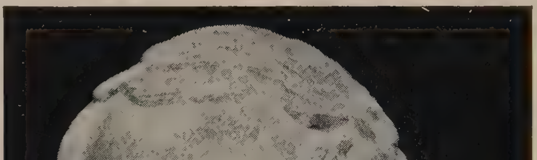

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

CICERO

The Vatican, Rome.

The great Roman orator.

much can be done the essence flies. Milton did wonders with the famous ode to Pyrrha ("Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa") in his rendering, which begins:

> What slender youth bedew'd with liquid odours
> Courts thee on roses in some pleasant cave,
> Pyrrha? for whom bind'st thou
> In wreaths thy golden hair,
> Plain in thy neatness?

It has been suggested that Horace uttered commonplaces. He did, but they are the commonplaces which every generation needs, and he gave them lyric forms so perfect that these have been handed down through nearly two thousand years of change and tumult. It may be hinted that his philosophy is that of running away from life. It is far more just to say that it teaches us not to let life run away with our best selves, and our real capacities to enjoy and improve it. He can exhort in terms which lack nothing of grave stimulus, as in his words to Lollius:

> Unless you light your early lamp, to find
> A moral book; unless you form your mind
> To noble studies, you shall forfeit rest,
> And love or envy shall distract your breast.
> For the hurt eye an instant cure you find:
> Then why neglect, for years, the sickening mind?
> Dare to be wise; begin, for, once begun,
> Your task is easy; half the work is done.
> And sure the man, who has it in his power
> To practise virtue, and protracts the hour,
> Waits like the rustic, till the river dried:
> Still glides the river and will ever glide.
>
> PHILIP FRANCIS.

Not the greatest of the Roman poets, but none is more secure of immortality than Horace. And it is pleasant to know that, like other poets, though with truer prevision, he was convinced that his songs would live. In one of his odes to Mæcenas he flings self-doubt aside and joyously announces (we quote Sir Theodore Martin's version):

> Though cradled at a poor man's hearth,
>   His offspring, I shall not
> Go down to mix with common earth,
>   Forgetting and forgot.

§ 13

Lucretius, Ovid, and Juvenal

Apart from the heroic poetry of Virgil and the lyrics of Horace, there are three other forms of Roman poetry. There is the great philosophic poem of Lucretius, "On the Nature of Things," written in the early part of the first century B.C. Secondly, there is what may be called the society verse of Ovid, a contemporary of Virgil and a pleasure-loving artist whose resolve to keep outside the political turmoil of his day did not prevent his being banished to a town on the banks of the Black Sea far away from the colour and gaiety of Rome. In his "Metamorphoses" Ovid retells many of the ancient Greek myths.

Finally, there were the satirists of whom the most eminent was Juvenal, a much later poet, who has left us a bitter picture of Rome under the Emperors, when the old patriotic spirit had disappeared, when wealth had elbowed worth out of all positions of eminence, when the parvenu flourished, and vice and vulgarity were rampant.

Juvenal, who was translated by Dryden and imitated by Dr. Johnson, did not mince words in his denunciations:

> Who would not, reckless of the swarm he meets,
> Fill his wide tablets, in the public streets,
> With angry verse? when, through the mid-day glare,
> Borne by six slaves, and in an open chair,
> The forger comes, who owes this blaze of state
> To a wet seal, and a fictitious date;

Comes like the soft Mæcenas, lolling by,
And impudently braves the public eye!
Or the rich dame, who stanched her husband's thirst
With generous wine, but drugged it deeply first!
And now, more dexterous than Locusta, shows
Her country friends the beverage to compose,
And, midst the curses of the indignant throng,
Bears, in broad day, the spotted corpse along.

§ 14

Catullus

Catullus was born at Verona about the year 87 B.C. His father, Valerius, a wealthy man, was a friend of Julius Cæsar. Catullus, not having to depend upon a patron, wrote to please himself and his friends—especially his lady-friends, of whom the chief was Lesbia, upon whose pet sparrow he wrote poems which have been the envy and despair of light versifiers ever since his day. No poet was ever so many-sided. He was one of the most witty of men; his pathos, as displayed in the elegy on his brother, rings deep and true; his love-songs are the finest in all antiquity; his style is as rich in colouring as the best of Keats. It may indeed be said as truly of Catullus as of Goldsmith, that he touched nothing which he did not adorn.

§ 15

Cicero

Cicero, the most famous of all the Latin prose-writers was born in 106 B.C. He was a busy lawyer-politician, whose life was spent amid the intrigues of Roman politics at the epoch when the Republic was destroyed and the Empire began. He was a man of easy-going disposition, who always found it difficult to be rancorous, who forgave his enemies easily, and was often on the most friendly terms with the bitter foes of yesterday. Such a man must inevitably be an inconstant politician, but despite his admiration for Julius Cæsar, Cicero was an honest republican.

And, though he was a man of somewhat fearful mind, he had courage enough at the end of his life vehemently to denounce Mark Antony just after he, with Octavius, had entered Rome after defeating Brutus and Cassius at Philippi. Antony vowed vengeance, and a few days later Cicero was murdered by Popilius Lænus, who sent the head and hands of the orator to Antony, who nailed them to the front of the rostrum from which Cicero had made many of his famous speeches.

During his life, Cicero held many important public offices, but he survives more by the speeches that he made in the law courts than by his political orations. Many of these speeches are instinct with excitement and interest, and can be read to-day almost as if they had just been addressed to a jury at the Old Bailey.

Sometimes Cicero, like Burke and other modern orators, was not above writing a speech which purported to be delivered and never was. A man called Milo killed a famous and disreputable Roman named Clodius in an inn on the Appian Way. He was arrested and tried for the offence, and just as if a wealthy man to-day killed somebody at Richmond and had the money to pay for the defence, he briefed Cicero as the leading defending counsel of the time. Cicero had many great qualities, but courage was not one of them. When he went to the Court to plead for his client he found it full of troops, lost his nerve, and was unable to say more than a few broken words. The prisoner was sentenced to banishment, and one day some weeks afterwards, when he was sitting at Marseilles, he received a letter from his defending counsel enclosing the speech *Pro Milone,* which is probably the most familiar work of Cicero to schoolboys. The convict who was its subject-matter liked it so well that he wrote a letter back to the barrister, saying: "I am glad that you did not deliver that speech, because if you had I should have got off, and I should not be eating this excellent mullet on which I am now lunching."

Photo: Anderson.

CICERO DENOUNCES CATILINE

From the painting by Maccari, Rome.

Cicero reached the height of his career as an orator with his famous denunciation of Catiline before the Roman Senate. The charge of treason failed for want of evidence. Catiline vowed vengeance against his accuser, and Cicero's later years were shadowed by the fear of assassination In the end he was killed by a creature of Antony, whom he had also denounced.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

MARCUS AURELIUS

Emperor and Stoic: almost the last of the Pagan philosophers

In addition to his speeches Cicero wrote philosophical treatises and a series of letters which, like Alexander Pope, he evidently anticipated would be published. These letters throw an astonishing flood of light on the life of Rome at the end of the Republic; and it is largely to them that we owe our intimate knowledge of the Imperial City at the beginning of the Christian Era. The vehemence of Cicero's oratory may be appreciated from the peroration of his arraignment of Mark Antony, to which reference has already been made.

> Are you in any respect to be compared with Cæsar? He had capacity, sense, memory, learning, foresight, reflection, and spirit. His warlike achievements, though ruinous to his country, were glorious to himself. Through inexpressible toil, through numberless dangers, he laid a scheme for a long possession of power. What he projected he perfected. With presents, with shows, with largesses, with entertainments, he soothed the thoughtless vulgar: by his liberality he obliged his friends; and by a semblance of clemency, his enemies. In short, partly by fear and partly by patience, he made the habit of slavery tolerable to a free State.
>
> The lust of power, I own, was, indeed, common to you both; though in no other respect can you admit of a comparison with him. But from all the misfortunes inflicted by him upon his country, this advantage accrued, that the people of Rome have learned how far any man is to be believed; they have learned whom to trust, and of whom to beware. But this gives you no concern; nor do you conceive what it is for brave men to have now learned how amiable in itself, how agreeable in the consequences, and how glorious it is in report, to kill a tyrant. If they could not bear with a Cæsar, will they endure Antony?
>
> Believe me, the world will henceforward eagerly rush upon such an enterprise; nor will they need ever wait long for an opportunity. Cast a considering eye, Mark Antony, at last upon your country. Reflect not on those with whom you live, but on those from whom you are descended. How-

> ever you may stand with me, yet reconcile yourself to your country. But of this you are the best judge. One thing on my own part I will here openly declare: In my youth I defended my country; in my old age I will not abandon her. The sword of Catiline I despised, and never shall I dread yours. With pleasure should I expose my person if by my blood the liberties of Rome could be immediately recovered, and the people of Rome delivered from that painful burden they have been so long in labour of. For if almost twenty years ago, in this very temple, I declared that no death could be untimely to me when Consular; much more truly can I declare the same now, when I am an aged man. To me, Conscript Fathers, death is even desirable, now I have performed all the duties which my station and character required. Two things only I have now to wish for: The first (than which the gods themselves can bestow nothing on me more grateful) is, that I may leave Rome in the enjoyment of her liberty; the other, that the reward of every man be proportioned to what he has deserved of his country.

It is little wonder that after listening to this splendid eloquence, the ruthless lover of Cleopatra should have determined that Cicero should live no longer and denounce no more.

§ 16

Cæsar and the Historians

Of all Latin books, Cæsar's *Commentaries* are most widely read in the modern world. No schoolboy can escape them. They were composed from the dispatches that he sent to the Senate at Rome during his campaigns in Gaul, and they may be compared to the dispatches written by a modern general with a literary gift like Sir Ian Hamilton. One outstanding characteristic of Cæsar was his constant care for the welfare of the common soldier.

The two most famous of the Roman historians were Livy, who was born in 59 B.C. and died in A.D. 17, and Tacitus, who lived in the first years of the Christian era. To Livy we owe the stories of the early Roman kings, of the foundation of the Roman Republic, and of the painful and sanguinary struggles by which the troubled community of Rome and its surrounding towns and villages became the controller of the Mediterranean. The parts of Livy which are generally read in the course of the ordinary English education are those which deal with the great conflict between Rome and the Semitic power on the other side of the Mediterranean at Carthage. The Carthaginians, scattered as they were by conquest, left no surviving literature, though they themselves probably survive as the bulk of the Jewish races dispersed over the world to-day. The story as told in Livy is, therefore, a one-sided story, but it is of interest because for the first time in classical literature one can trace an author's writing to its source. Most of his material he owes to an historian called Polybius, who wrote in Greek and who, living nearer than Livy to the time of the Punic wars, was able to obtain details which gave his account an importance not possessed by that of Livy himself.

The works of Tacitus deal with events either within the historian's own recollection or sufficiently near for him to have had trustworthy sources of information. They show a capacity for the study of character, great narrative gifts of compression and point, and a desire to use history as a means of instruction and warning to the politicians and peoples of the future. The strength of the writing of Tacitus lies in the irony and brilliance of his own comments on the emperors and statesmen with whom he deals. Possessing a mental temperament which was naturally bitter and biting, he forged a Latin style for his own use utterly unlike that of any other Roman prose-writer. His pages overflow with epigram and with the efficient exercise of a kind of humourless wit.

Tacitus has other claims than those of his annals and his-tories for the attention of students of literature. He was the first Roman writer, or at any rate the first whose works have remained, to write a biography, and his life of his uncle, the Roman General Agricola, who spent most of his active military career in Britain, is the earliest piece of biographical writing we have. Nothing is more strange in the history of literature than the fact that the interest in the writing of men's lives appears late in every country—except among the Jews. The fashion, however, soon spread in Rome. There are Suetonius's *Lives of the Cæsars,* which filled in many tragic and sensational details in the more sober stories of their reigns as told by Tacitus. Above all, there is the work of Plutarch, who, though writing in Greek, wrote under the Roman Empire.

§ 17

The Last Phase

The Golden Age of Latin literature, the first half of which coincided with the last years of the Republic, continued through the reign of Augustus down to about A.D. 17. The Silver Age came to an end with the death of Juvenal in A.D. 120. In addition to Tacitus and Juvenal the writers of the Silver Age included Suetonius, to whom passing reference has already been made; Seneca, the philosopher and tutor of Nero; and Martial, the epigrammist, who was described by a contemporary as "a man of talent, acuteness, and spirit, with plenty of wit and gall, and sincere as he was witty."

With the decadence of the Roman Empire came the decadence of Latin literature. The writing of poetry ceased, and the history of classical literature comes to an end with *The Golden Ass* of Lucius Apuleius, who was born in Africa, and after a grand tour of the Roman world married a rich widow, and was thus able to devote himself to literature. *The Golden Ass* is among the earliest novels ever written. It is a fictional autobiography in which the author describes how he was tried and condemned for the murder of three leathern bottles. He was brought back to life by a sorceress, whom he wished to follow in the shape of a bird, but owing to some mistake he was transformed instead into an ass. In his search for the rose-leaves that alone could give him back his human form, he had many strange adventures. He was bullied by his own horse and beaten by his own groom. He heard exactly what his friends thought of him, and had other fantastic experiences. The whole thing is amazingly interesting and often licentious. Boccaccio, Cervantes, and Le Sage borrowed incidents from *The Golden Ass,* and it was translated into English by Willian Adlington in 1566.

The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius was almost the last literary achievement of the Roman Empire. Marcus Aurelius was a Roman emperor, his rule starting in A.D. 161, but it is interesting to note that he wrote in Greek. He was a man of noble character, intent on living a good life and fulfilling his obligations to his people. There were three persecutions of the Christians during his reign, but it must be remembered that in the Roman Empire of the second century the Christians were regarded with exactly the same popular dislike as the Jews were regarded in Tsarist Russia. The power of the Emperor was limited; he was always fearful of exciting widespread public disapproval, and, moreover, it is certain that Marcus Aurelius knew nothing of Christian ethics and doctrines. To him the Christians were merely enemies of the people.

The *Meditations* are a record of the Emperor's daily reflections on life and the nature of man, and are a perfect expression of Stoic philosophy. This philosophy is similar to that of Epictetus, a Greek slave belonging to one of Nero's courtiers, lame, in weak health, his life spent in poverty and obscurity. Slave and Emperor agreed in insisting that Virtue was its own reward, that man was helpless in the hands of God, and that whatever God did was right. The teaching of the *Meditations* is summarised in the following text from Epictetus:

> Remember that you are an actor in a drama, of such a kind as the author pleases to make it. If short, of a short one; if long, of a long one. If it be his pleasure you should act a poor man, a cripple, a governor, or a private person, see that you act it naturally. For this is your business, to act well the character assigned you; to choose it, is another's.

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Prof. A. S. Wilkins's *Roman Literature.*

Translations of most of the important Greek and Latin authors are accessible in such series as the Loeb Classical Library, the Everyman's Library, the World's Classics, and Bohn's Library.

The Loeb Classical Library, of which many volumes are now ready, will ultimately include all the classical writers of importance. Every volume in this series contains the Greek or Latin text with English translation on opposite pages.

Sir R. C. Jebb's English Prose Translation of the *Plays of Sophocles.*

Plato's *Republic* and *The Trial and Death of Socrates.*

The Pocket Horace (the Latin Text with Conington's translation on opposite pages), is published complete in one volume, or in two separate volumes, *The Odes* and *The Satires, Epistles,* etc.

Translations from Horace, by Sir Stephen E. De Vere, Bart.

The Works of Horace, 2 vols., translated into English verse, with a life and notes by Sir Theodore Martin.

Prof. W. Y. Sellar's *Virgil,* and his *Horace and the Elegiac Poets.*

VIII

THE MIDDLE AGES

THE MIDDLE AGES

§ 1

IN DARKEST EUROPE

THE Middle Ages is the name commonly given to that period of European history that lasted from the sack and capture of Rome in A.D. 410, by the Visigoths under Alaric, to the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. Even before the passing of the Roman Empire of the West, there had been for over two hundred years a period of stagnation in which little, if any, literature was produced. Rome was, for years, fighting a losing battle against the barbarian hordes who had crossed the old imperial frontier of the Rhine and the Danube, the most terrible of these hordes being the Huns under the leadership of Attila. The whole fabric of Roman civilisation was gradually overwhelmed by the armies of the ignorant, and was apparently, but only apparently, lost for ever.

The Gradual Creation of Nationalities

The new masters of the West cared nothing for culture, and for the most part they could neither read nor write. In the centuries that followed, Europe saw the gradual creation of nationalities and distinctive national life, by the amalgamation of races, and after persistent struggles between rival kings and chieftains. England was invaded by Angles and Saxons, by Danes, and by Normans, who although they came from France were the descendants of Scandinavian pirates. France was overrun by Franks, a Teuton people, and by Normans; and the Norman knights established their rule as far south as the island of Sicily.

For a thousand years Europe was the scene of constant war, pestilence, and famine, the sole protection that the common people had against the reckless and ruthless tyranny of barons and overlords being the steadily increasing power of the Church. In such a time of unexampled turmoil it was impossible for any literature to be produced. The learning that had been born in Greece and nurtured in Rome was neglected and despised by the rude fighting chieftains, but the great books produced by the ancient world were not entirely lost. Copies were carefully preserved and recopied in the monasteries of the Benedictine monks, who alone cherished the remains of Roman civilisation. St. Benedict was born in 480, and was one of the brilliant lights of the Dark Ages. The monks who obeyed his rule were ordered to read and study. Longfellow says of St. Benedict in his "Monte Cassino":

> He founded here his Convent and his Rule
> Of prayer and work, and counted work as prayer;
> The pen became a clarion, and his school
> Flamed like a beacon in the midnight air.

In Ireland and certain parts of England, countries which suffered less than the continent of Europe from the mediæval ravages, the old learning survived when it was practically lost everywhere else—everywhere else in Europe, that is to say, except in Spain, which was invaded by the Arabs in 709, and remained for nearly eight hundred years wholly or partially under Moslem rule. The Arabs had come into contact with Greek culture when they overran Egypt, and while Christian

Europe was wrapped in ignorance they established schools and academies at Damascus, Bagdad, Cairo, and Cordova in Spain, where Aristotle, Plato, and Euclid were studied side by side with the Koran. In the latter half of the Middle Ages the French or English scholar eager for real knowledge made his way to Cordova, Toledo, or Seville to learn from Jewish or Moorish professors, and it is said that in the thirteenth century St. Thomas Aquinas was taught Greek and enabled to read Aristotle by a Moor from one of the Spanish universities. In the last three years of his life the "angelic Doctor," as Aquinas was styled, wrote his *Summa Theologica,* which is still accepted as the final authoritative exposition of the Roman doctrine. A tremendous and enduring masterpiece of the human mind, it is to Christian philosophy what Dante's vast poem is to Christian poetry!

There were beacon lights even in the darkest times: individual scholars like the Venerable Bede, a monk of Northumberland, who wrote a history of the Anglo-Saxons in the eighth century, and great popular movements like the Crusades. The soul of Europe began to awaken when Peter the Hermit preached the First Crusade in France and Germany, and "the common people heard him gladly." The Dark Ages, indeed, came to an end long before the close of the Middle Ages. In the thirteenth century Roger Bacon, a Franciscan monk, of Oxford, urged men not to accept dogma and authority without question and to experiment for themselves, and in many respects he anticipated the discoveries of modern times. And in the same century Dante was born. St. Augustine stands at the threshold of the Middle Ages, which are dominated at their close by the sublime figure of the great Italian poet.

St. Jerome

St. Jerome, a contemporary of St. Augustine, was the greatest Christian scholar during the last years of the Roman Empire. St. Jerome, indeed, was a scholar before he was a Christian. He was familiar with the classic writers, and the style of the Scriptures seemed to him rough and uncouth. Christ reproached him in a dream for preferring to be a Ciceronian rather than a Christian, and he resolved to devote the rest of his life to the study of the sacred books. The result was his famous translation of the Bible into Latin. With the help of Jewish scholars he translated the Old Testament from the Hebrew. He translated part of the Apocrypha from Chaldee and the New Testament, of course, from Greek. St. Jerome's version, known as the Vulgate, is still to the Roman Catholic Church the authorised version of the Scriptures, though it was considerably changed in later ages. St. Jerome died in 420. He was a voluminous writer and a man of most difficult temper, "always preferring an opinion to a friend."

§ 2

ST. AUGUSTINE

St. Augustine was born in 354. The capture of Rome by Alaric in 410 inspired his *The City of God,* in which he declared: "The greatest city of the world has fallen in ruin, but the City of God abideth for ever." St. Augustine lives in literary history mainly as the author of the *Confessions,* which have a human interest equal to that of the self-revelations of Bunyan and Rousseau. St. Augustine was born at a village in North Africa. His father was a pagan, his mother, Monica, a devout Christian. He was educated at Carthage, and afterwards became a professor of literature and oratory. He lived the ordinary life of a well-educated and well-to-do young man of the times, afterwards recalling the sins of his youth with the same bitter exaggeration that one finds in Bunyan's *Grace Abounding.* For years he tried to find rest and explanation in the various ancient philosophical systems, finally becoming a convert to Christianity in Milan, where he had been appointed to the chair of rhetoric.

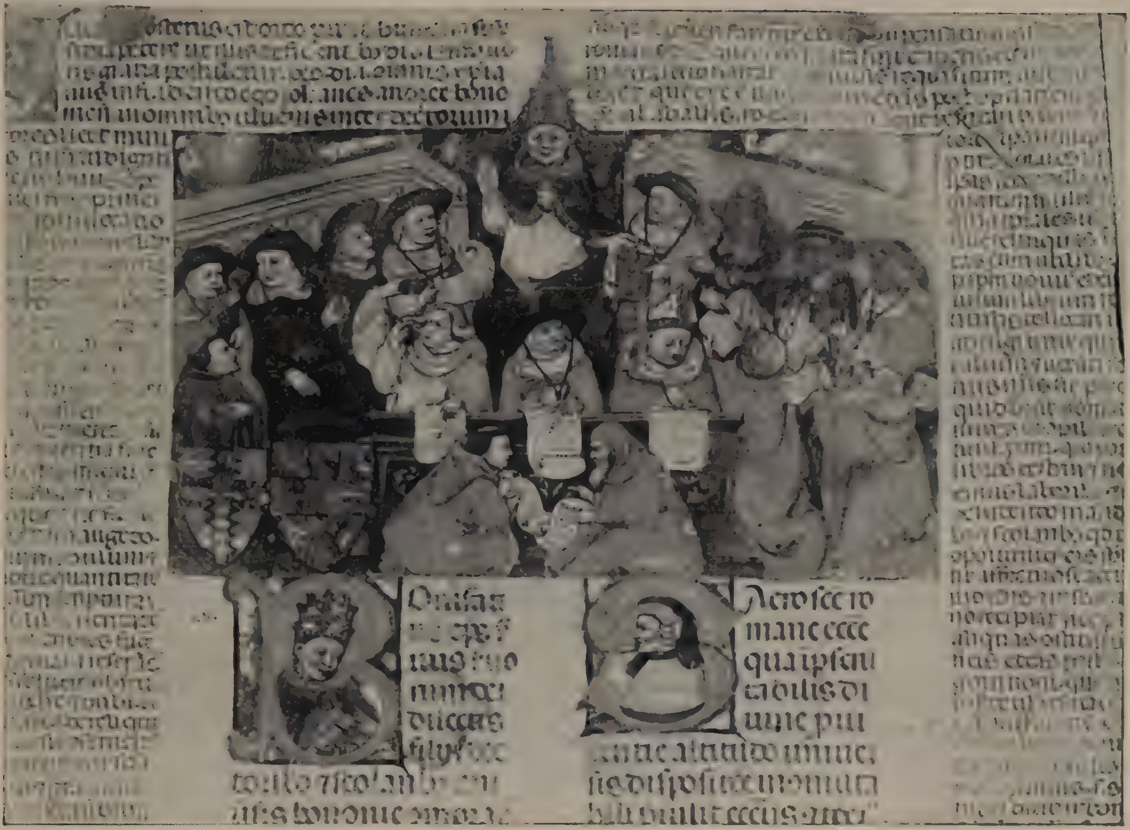

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT. A POPE IN CONSISTORY. (Early fourteenth century.)

A beautiful example of a monkish mediæval manuscript. In the centuries when art and literature were almost dead, books were copied with fine embellishments in the scriptoriums of the monasteries.

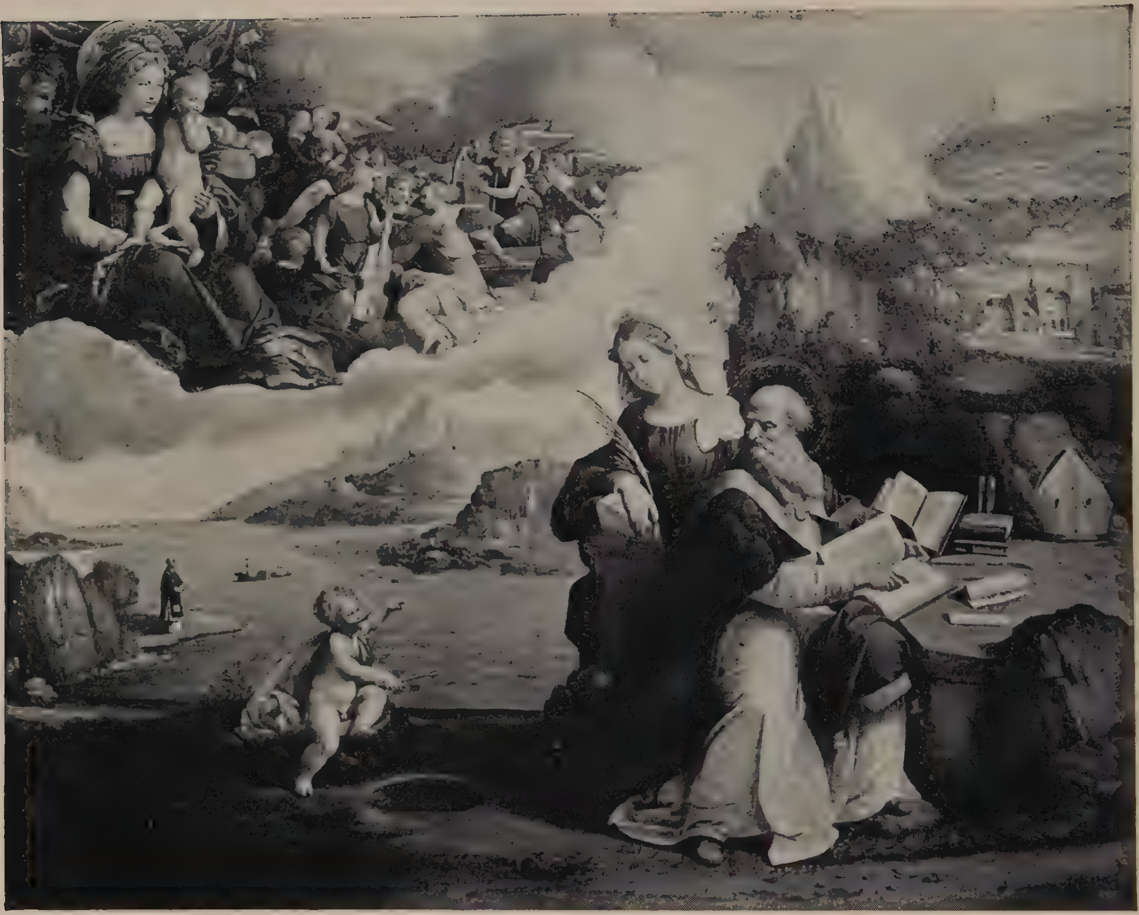

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE VISION OF ST. AUGUSTINE," BY GAROFALO

National Gallery, London.

St. Augustine was born in Africa in 354. In his youth learned in Pagan philosophy, he became the most authoritative of the Fathers of the Church. This picture reveals a vision of the heavenly stranger, more wonderful than all the beauties of the earth.

His mother had come from Africa to join him, and after his baptism they started to return to Africa, Augustine intending to lead a life of ascetic devotion. They stayed for a night or two at Ostia, the port of Rome, and here Monica fell ill and died.

The relations between mother and son have remained a treasure of the Church. Augustine wrote of his mother's "slavery" to him, declaring that she was "twice my mother: in the flesh that I might be born into earthly light, in heart that I might be born into light eternal." After his mother's death, St. Augustine stayed for a year in Rome, and then returned home, soon to be appointed Bishop of Hippo.

He was the most voluminous writer of his time, being the author, it is said, of no fewer than 230 books, in addition to innumerable homilies.

A Voluminous Writer

Augustine was an artist as well as a saint. He loved beauty, he joyed in music, and, indeed, he frequently accuses himself of being too much affected by æsthetic pleasure. His *Confessions* are obviously sincere. Their human value lies in the fact that they are an unvarnished picture of the inner life of a very real man. St. Augustine remains the most authoritative of all the Fathers of the Church, and there is a wider interest in him for, ascetic though he was, he was also a man. He says:

> There were other things which in them did more take my mind; to talk and jest together, to do kind offices by turns; to read together honied books; to play the fool or be earnest together; to dissent at times without discontent, as a man might with his own self; and even with the seldomness of these dissentings, to season our more frequent consentings; sometimes to teach, and sometimes learn; long for the absent with impatience; and welcome the coming with joy. These and the like expressions, proceeding out of the hearts of those that loved and were loved again, by

> the countenance, the tongue, the eyes, and a thousand pleasing gestures, were so much fuel to melt our souls together, and out of many make but one.
>
> This is it that is loved in friends; and so loved, that a man's conscience condemns itself, if he love not him that loves him again, or love not again him that loves him, looking for nothing from his person, but indications of his love. Hence that mourning, if one die, and darkening of sorrows, that steeping of the heart in tears, all sweetness turned to bitterness; and upon the loss of life of the dying, the death of the living.

The *Confessions* abound in vivid imagery, and with phrases that have passed into all European languages, such as, "the biter bit," and "life of my life."

The literary tradition founded in the Church by St. Jerome and St. Augustine was never quite lost. Reference has already been made to St. Benedict, who, a hundred years after St. Augustine's death, taught his monks to study and to preserve and copy the ancient manuscripts. St. Columba, the Apostle of Caledonia, was another literary monk of the early Middle Ages. In his *Books and their Makers in the Middle Ages,* Mr. George Haven Putnam says:

> According to one of the stories, Columba journeyed to Ossory in the south-west to visit a holy and very learned recluse, a doctor of laws and philosophy, named Longarad. Columba asked leave to examine the doctor's books, and when the old man refused, the monk burst out in an imprecation: "May thy books no longer do thee any good, neither to them who come after thee, since thou takest occasion by them to show thine inhospitality." The curse was heard and after Longarad died, his books became unintelligible. An author of the sixth century says that the books still existed, but that no man could read them.
>
> Another story speaks of Columba's undertaking, while visiting his ancient master Finnian, to make a clandestine and hurried copy of the abbot's Psalter. He shut himself

Copyright photo: Eyre & Spottiswoode, Ltd.

"THE MEETING OF DANTE AND BEATRICE," BY HENRY HOLIDAY

REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE CORPORATION OF LIVERPOOL

Dante and Beatrice first met when they were nine years old. The second meeting, depicted by the artist, took place years afterwards in a street in Florence; but although they did not speak, and, indeed, though it is doubtful whether they ever spoke, Beatrice's image was engraven on Dante's heart until his death.

> up at night in the church where the Psalter was deposited, and the light needed for his nocturnal work radiated from his left hand while he wrote with the right. A curious wanderer, passing the church, was attracted by the singular light, and looked in through the keyhole, and while his face was pressed against the door his eye was suddenly torn out by a crane which was roosting in the church. The wanderer went with his story to the abbot, and Finnian, indignant at what he considered to be a theft, claimed from Columba the copy which the monk had prepared, contending that a copy made without permission ought to belong to the owner of the original, on the ground that the transcript is the offspring of the original work. As far as I have been able to ascertain, this is the first instance which occurs in the history of European literature of a contention for copyright. Columba refused to give up his manuscript, and the question was referred to King Diarmid or Dermott, in the palace of Tara. The King's judgment was given in a rustic phrase which has passed into a proverb in Ireland: "To every cow her calf, and consequently to every book its copy."

Despite the enthusiasm of scholarly churchmen, after the death of St. Augustine there was no outstanding event in literary history for seven hundred years.

§ 3

THE NIBELUNGEN LIED

The German "Iliad"—the *Nibelungen Lied*—is the treasure-house in which Wagner found the stories of his music-dramas.

A twelfth-century German poet, whose name is unknown, gathered together the primitive hero-stories of the Northern peoples, sung round camp fires probably long before the art of writing was known, just as centuries before Homer had collected the myths and legends of the ancient Greeks. The unnamed poet called his stories the *Nibelungen Lied,* the Songs of the People of Darkness, and these folk-stories are still regarded by the Germans with the same veneration as the Greeks had for the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey." Just as the Homeric stories were the subjects of the great Greek tragedies, so the *Nibelungen Lied* finds a permanent place in modern art in Wagner's music-dramas.

The story of the *Nibelungen Lied* is told in thirty-nine adventures. It begins with the coming of the hero Siegfried, the son of Siegmund, King of the Netherland, to Worms to woo the peerless beauty Kriemhild, the sister of King Günther of Burgundy.

The Hero Siegfried

Now this Siegfried had had strange adventures in his youth, when he had been apprenticed to a sword-smith. He had slain a dragon and bathed in its blood, so that he was completely invulnerable, save where a leaf of the linden had stuck between his shoulders during the bathing. This was his Achilles heel. He had also acquired the sword Balmung, of wondrous potency, a Tarnkappe or cloak of invisibility which also gave him the strength of twelve strong men, a divining rod which gave him power over everyone, and, lastly, the Hoard of the Nibelungs (a mythical mass of gold and precious stones) and, with it, the overlordship of the Dwarf Alberich and all his myrmidons.

So when King Günther decides to voyage to Isenland and win for himself, if that may be, the beautiful but wayward Queen Brunhild, Siegfried goes with him in the guise of his vassal on the understanding that he is to have Kriemhild to wife if he helps Günther to achieve the perilous adventure. This Brunhild, as we know from the more primitive form of the Siegfried story used in Wagner's operas, is really a Valkyr or warrior, whose vocation it is to lead the pagan heroes from their last battlefield into Valhalla, and she could only give her-

"THE RING OF THE NIBELUNGS." THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

To avenge her husband's death, Kriemhild, Siegfried's widow, arranges the slaughter of Brunhild's followers.

Carlyle has written: "Host after host, as they enter that huge vaulted Hall, perish in conflict with the doomed Nibelungen; and ever after the terrific uproar, ensues a still more terrific silence. All night and through morning it lasts. They throw the dead from the windows; blood runs like water; the Hall is set fire to, they quench it with blood, their own burning thirst they slake with blood."

Photo: Anderson.

DANTE

National Museum, Naples.

The greatest of all Italian poets, the author of *The Divine Comedy*, "a story of immortal joys and sorrows," was born in Florence in 1265 and died in exile in 1321.

By permission of the Artist.

"THE RIDE OF THE VALKYRS," BY J. C. DOLLMAN

Queen Brunhild was one of the Valkyr women, whose business it was to lead dead heroes from their last battlefield into Valhalla. If a Valkyr gave herself in love she lost her immortality.

Photo: Braun.

"BRUNHILD AND SIEGMUND," BY J. WAGREZ

Brunhild, so runs one of the Norse legends, was sent by the god Odin to summon Siegmund from the side of the beautiful Sieglinde, whom he loved.

self in love to a mortal at the cost of her immortality. In the later, milder version presented in the "lay," she is a maiden of flesh-and-blood with certain preternatural gifts, and he who would wed her must beat her at hurling the spear, leaping, and throwing the stone.

With the help of Siegfried in his cloak of invisibility and with his strength multiplied by wearing it, Günther—"he only acting the gestures"—vanquishes the wonder-maiden, and she goes to Worms, where the two bridal-feasts are celebrated with astounding splendour. But on her wedding-night the terrible Brunhild, thanks to her magical maiden-might (last relic of her primitive godhead!), ties Günther hard and fast, hand and foot, in her girdle, and hangs him up on a nail in the wall. Siegfried again helps Günther, and once Brunhild ceases to be a maiden all her strength is gone; Siegfried takes as his prize the fierce virgin's ring and girdle, which he presents to his own loving wife. Years of high enterprise and joyous living (with the help of the Hoard of the Nibelungs) go by, and there is only one little cause of trouble—Queen Brunhild's notion that Siegfried is only Günther's vassal, and that she is Queen Kriemhild's superior. In the Fourteenth Adventure—"How the two Queens rated one another"—the fatal secret is revealed. Siegfried, with his wife and his kingly father, with a great train of Nibenlungen Ritters and Netherlanders, comes to a feast at Worms, and all goes well till Brunhild and Kriemhild take to arguing about the relative merits of their husbands, which ends in the former's assertion at the door of the Minister, when she overtakes the latter with her far more magnificent retinue, that "before King's wife shall vassal's wife never go." Then the secret came out like a lightning flash:

> Then said the fair Kriemhilde. Right angry was her mood:
> "Couldst thou but hold thy peace It was surely for thy good;
> Thyself has all polluted With shame thy fair bodye.
> How can a concubine By right a king's wife be?"

In proof of which she produces the ring and the girdle, and Brunhild bursts into tears, afterwards deeply pondering how she can take vengeance for so black an injury to her pride.

She persuades the grim warrior Hagen to be the minister of her revenge. He wheedles from Kriemhild the secret that Siegfried has the one vulnerable spot between his shoulders, and the hero is treacherously killed while he is hunting. Then, that her humiliation may be complete, Kriemhild is persuaded to send for the Nibelungen Hoard, which is at once stolen by Hagen, and Siegfried's widow is left penniless and sorrowful for thirteen years. Then King Etzel sends from his far country to ask for her hand, and she accepts him, hoping that a new marriage may give her the power to hit back at her rival, Brunhild.

Years pass again and Kriemhild sends an invitation to Günther and his champions to visit her husband's court. Hagen at once realises the reason for the invitation, and tries to persuade the king not to make the journey, but he is overruled. Weird omens meet them on the way which Hagen, now grown old and reckless, treats with the scorn of desperation—"mixed was his hair with the grey colour, his limbs massy, and menacing his look"—but he has no fear: with his staunch companion Volker, with his "steel fiddle-bow," he is confident he can still beat strange music from the helms of his foes.

King Etzel, who knows nothing of Kriemhild's plan of vengeance, receives the strangers with joy and hospitality, but the trouble starts as soon as they appear at the royal feast. Hagen's swift reply to Kriemhild's provocation is to hew off the head of her and Etzel's son, making it bound into his mother's lap. Kriemhild was like a fury, and a great fight begins. Carlyle has described it in vivid sentences that are all his own:

> Host after host, as they enter that huge vaulted Hall, perish in conflict with the doomed Nibelungen; and ever after the terrific uproar, ensues a still more terrific silence. All night and through morning it lasts. They throw the

dead from the windows; blood runs like water; the Hall is set fire to, they quench it with blood, their own burning thirst they slake with blood. It is a tumult like the Crack of Doom, a thousand-voiced, wild-stunning hubbub; and frightful like a Trump of Doom, the *Sword-fiddlebow* of Volker, who guards the door, makes music to that death-dance. Nor are traits of heroism wanting, and thrilling tones of pity and love; as in that act of Rudiger, Etzel's and Kriemhild's champion, who, bound by oath, "lays his soul in God's hand," and enters that Golgotha to die fighting against his friends; yet first changes shields with Hagen, whose own, also given him by Rudiger in a far other hour, had been shattered in the fight. "When he so lovingly bade him give the shield, there were eyes enough red with hot tears; it was the last gift which Rudiger of Becharen gave to any Recke. As grim as Hagen was, and as hard of mind, he wept at the gift which this hero good, so near his last times, had given him; full many a noble Ritter began to weep."

At last Volker is slain; they are all slain, save only Hagen and Günther, faint and wounded, yet still unconquered among the bodies of the dead. Dietrich the wary, though strong and invincible, whose Recken too, except old Hildebrand, he now finds are all killed, though he had charged them strictly not to mix in the quarrel, at last arms himself to finish it. He subdues the two wearied Nibelungen, binds them, delivers them to Chriemhild; "and Herr Dietrich went away with weeping eyes, worthily from the heroes." These never saw each other more. Chriemhild demands of Hagen, Where the Nibelungen Hoard is? But he answers her, that he has sworn never to disclose it while any of her brothers live. "I bring it to an end," said the infuriated woman; orders her brother's head to be struck off, and holds it up to Hagen. "Thou hast known it now according to thy will," said Hagen; "of the Hoard knoweth none but God and I; from thee, she-devil (*valendinne*), shall it for ever be hid." She kills him with his own sword, once her husband's; and is herself struck dead by Hildebrand, indignant at the woe she has wrought;

> King Etzel, there present, not opposing the deed. Whereupon the curtain drops over that wild scene; "the full highly honoured were lying dead; the people all had sorrow and lamentation; in grief had the king's feast ended, as all love is wont to do."

Nothing is clear or coherent in the *Nibelungen Lied.* It is an antique tapestry shaken by the wind. But its stark heroes, its fierce queens, are bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. As Carlyle said: "The city of Worms, had we a right imagination, ought to be as venerable to us moderns as any Thebes or Troy was to the ancients."

§ 4

THE TROUBADOURS

During the Moorish occupation, there grew up in Spain a life of gaiety and courtesy for courtesy's sake, and the lute and mandolin music, which was its joyous accompaniment, crossed the Pyrenees, reaching Provence and Languedoc first of all, then Sicily and Italy, and finally filling all Western Europe with wandering Troubadours and Minnesingers. The roving minstrel who sang in the vernacular and besought his hearers to listen to a tale, "which is merryr than the nightengale," was the pioneer of all the romantic and sentimental literature of modern Europe.

Some of the Troubadours were nobles and princes, among them our own Richard Cœur-de-Lion, who wrote verses in both the *langue d'oc* and the *langue d'œil,* the two dialects of mediæval French, and who has left one poem of genuine beauty, written while he was imprisoned by the Duke of Austria on his way home from the crusade.

Fantastic Legends

The reign of the Troubadours lasted about two centuries; it nearly coincides with the eleventh and twelfth centuries. A host of fantastic legends is recalled by the names of the Troubadours; their passion scaled the heights of Southern society, lofty princesses accepting their hearts as oblations to beauty. Some of them were gallant Crusaders; many became monks when the love-time was over for ever. Perhaps the most romantic figure of all was Jaufré Rudel, whose soul ever turned to Melisande, the Lady of Tripoli, praised alike for her beauty, her courtesy, and her charity. Both Browning and Swinburne have been inspired by his story; the latter, in whose poems the spirit of the Troubadours lives again so often, has told the tale of his soul's glad passing:

> Died, praising God for His gift and grace:
>   For she bowed down to him weeping and said
> "Live"; and her tears were shed on his face
>   Or ever the life in his face was shed.
> The sharp tears fell through her hair, and stung
> Once, and her close lips touched him and clung
> Once, and grew one with his lips for a space;
>   And so drew back, and the man was dead.

It must not be forgotten that the Troubadour, even if he came of lowly origin, was always a lordly person—ennobled by his poetical gift beyond every ungifted noble. Writers of modern romance have confused him with the *Jogller* or musician who accompanied his recitation with lute or mandolin. This accompanist was of lower rank, being merely a successor of the merry-man who went from castle to castle to play dance-music, show acrobatic feats, or even exhibit performing animals.

The Trouvères, or court poets, who flourished in Northern and Central France during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, are a minor poetic influence in comparison with the Troubadours. They were not lovers singing to their lady-loves at the height of their age; no legends have gathered about their names, and they pass like phantoms across the history of a land more interested in politics and war than in poetry. They were pedants of a sentimentality which seems cold and remote from life in comparison with the passion of the Southern singers. Nevertheless this Northern cult was one of the minor influences which refined conduct and enforced the ideal of chivalry. They, like the Troubadours, were pioneers of literature.

The most famous of the romances in verse that were recited by the wandering mediæval minstrels is *The Song of Roland,* in which an unknown eleventh-century poet tells, with fine dramatic simplicity, the story of a great fight in a pass in the Pyrenees between the army of Charlemagne and the Saracens of Saragossa. Charlemagne, with his main army, deceived by the Saracens, has crossed the mountains back into France, leaving Roland with the rear-guard to hold the pass. Roland is treacherously attacked by the Saracens, aided by recreant Christian knights, and after a mighty struggle he is killed, with the whole of his army.

Among French stories of a rather later time, the most interesting is *Aucassin and Nicolette,* which belongs to the thirteenth century. It is a love romance written partly in prose and partly in verse.

§ 5

DANTE

There is no more magnificent personage in the whole pageant of literature than Dante—the tall, spare man with his long, grey robes, his red head-dress with the laurel leaves about it, and his sorrowful aquiline face, whose figure is as familiar to us as the figure of Shakespeare himself. We know little of the personal life of Shakespeare, and that little can hardly be called romantic, but we have the details of the life of Dante, and he is the hero of one of the strangest and most beautiful love stories in the world.

Dante and Beatrice

Dante was born in Florence in 1265. When he was nine he met Beatrice, a child of the same age. The children did not

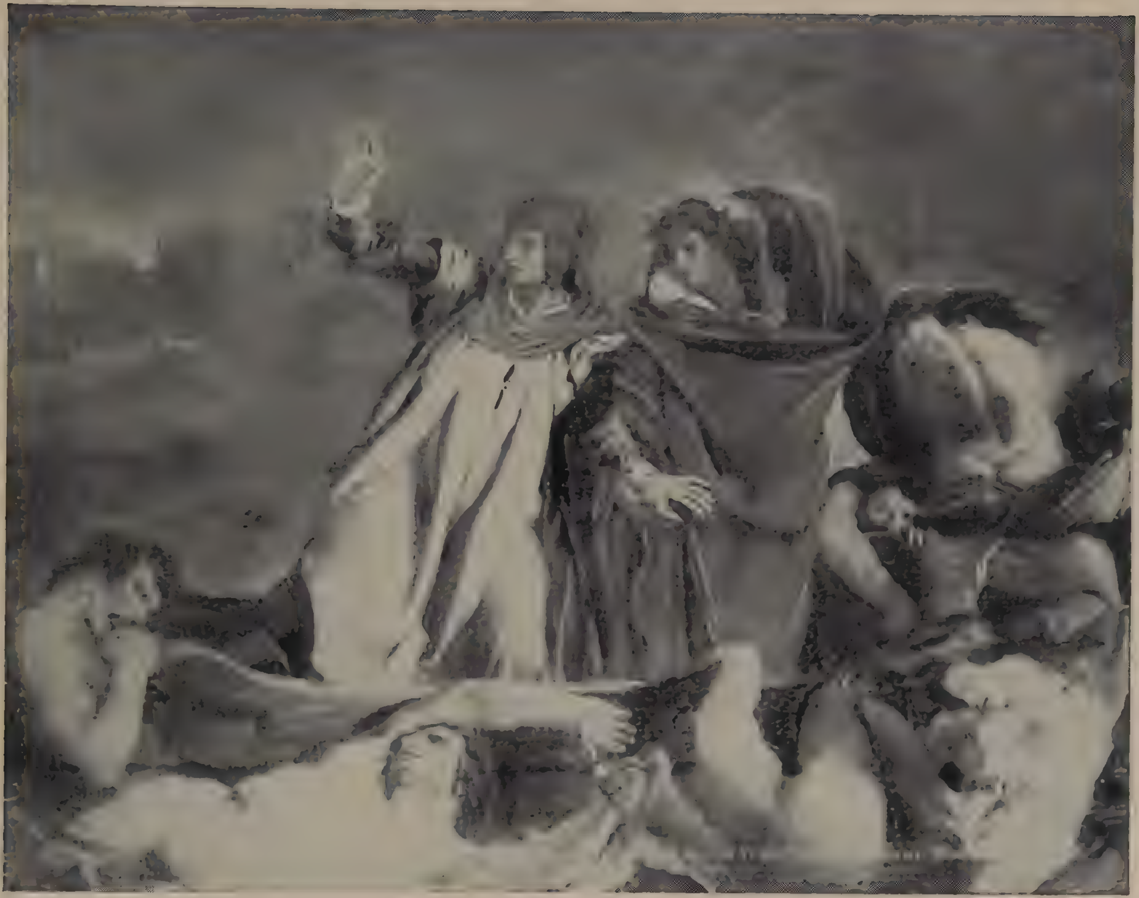

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"DANTE AND VIRGIL," BY DELACROIX

The Louvre, Paris.

Dante and Virgil are here shown crossing the Styx—"the awful marsh in which the Sullen writhe like eels, and in whose dark waters fight the Spirits of the Angry."

Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

"DANTE'S DREAM," BY ROSSETTI

Reproduced by permission of the Corporation of Liverpool.

Beatrice, living or dead, was always in the poet's mind.

speak, but the poet declares that "from that day forward love quite governed my soul." Beatrice remained for him for ever "the glorious lady of my mind," and years afterwards he recalled that on the most wonderful day of his life she wore a dress "of a most noble colour, a subdued and goodly crimson, girdled and adorned in such sort as best suited with her very tender age." Nine years passed and the poet met Beatrice again, dressed in white, and walking with two older ladies in the streets of Florence. Again they did not speak, but "she turned her eyes thither where I stood sorely abashed, and by her unspeakable courtesy she saluted me with so virtuous a bearing that I seemed then and there to behold the very limits of blessedness." He only saw Beatrice once more. How pathetic and how ironic it is that Beatrice never knew of the deep passion that she had inspired in the greatest heart that ever beat in Italy, a passion immortalised in one of the supreme masterpieces of literature.

Beatrice married, and died when she was thirty-five. Writing after her death Dante said: "When I had lost the first delight of my soul (that is, Beatrice) I remained so pierced with sadness that no comfort availed me anything." The story of his passion is told in his first notable Italian book, *La Vita Nuova*—a philosophical treatise interspersed with sonnets. The following is Rossetti's translation of one of the most beautiful of these sonnets, in which Dante explains the reason of his lady's early death:

Such an exceeding glory went up hence
  That it woke wonder in the Eternal Sire,
  Until a sweet desire
Entered Him for that lovely excellence,
  So that He bade her to Himself aspire;
Counting this weary and most evil place
Unworthy of a thing so full of grace.[1]

After the *Vita Nuova,* except for a series of lyrics Dante wrote nothing in his own language until he began *The Divine*

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[1] *Vita Nuova* (Rossetti's translation).

Comedy. The Latin works which occupied the interregnum need not concern us. The great work of his life was his tribute to the woman whom he loved. Dante's *Divine Comedy* was written for the dead Beatrice. In the last chapter of the *Vita Nuova* he says:

> If it be His pleasure through whom is the life of all things that my life continue with me a few years, it is my hope that I shall yet write concerning her what hath not before been written of any woman. After which may it seem good unto Him who is the master of grace that my spirit should go hence to behold the glory of its lady, to wit, Beatrice.

Two years after the death of Beatrice, the poet married a lady of noble birth, whose fidelity and strength of character in times of trouble were outweighed by a violence of temper which became not the least of the troubles of a tragically troubled and disappointed life. It is supposed that the poet was referring to his own wife, Gemma, when he wrote in the sixteenth canto of the "Inferno":

> Me, my wife
> Or savage temper, more than aught beside,
> Hath to this evil brought.

The Life of Dante

It is impossible to understand Dante without some idea of the setting of his life. He is the bridge between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. He was born in the mediæval golden age, having as contemporaries Roger Bacon, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Louis of France. Giotto, the great mediæval painter, was his companion and friend. The fact that Dante was the first great Italian writer who wrote in his own language has caused him to be regarded as the forerunner of the Renaissance. But *The Divine Comedy* is the incarnation of all that is most splendid and wonderful in mediæval Catholicism. In it the reader finds the quintessence of the philosophy, theology, and the chivalry of the Middle Ages. The scheme of the poem is even more grandiose than the scheme of the "Iliad"; the nobility of its conception and the amazing variety of its characters have no parallel in literature. The wealth of its imagery may be realised in the English translations, but, alas! the beauty of the verse is naturally lost. Just as Shakespeare has no peer among later English writers, so Dante stands supreme in the literature of Italy. But he is far more than an Italian figure; he belongs to Europe, and he and his work are the crown and the climax of the Middle Ages.

Unfortunately for his happiness, while still a young man Dante became involved in the intrigues of Florentine politics, in the feud between the two parties, the Guelphs and Ghibellines. The first were the adherents of the Papal power, and the second supported the authority of the Emperor, a German prince living in Vienna, who claimed sovereignty in Italy. It is sufficient to note that Dante, after facing both ways for some years, espoused the cause of the Emperor, and that the Guelphs having triumphed, he was banished from Florence in 1302, and remained in exile until he died in 1321, wandering from city to city, travelling certainly as far as Paris, and even, according to tradition, to Oxford. For the most part he lived unhappily in various Italian cities, and *The Divine Comedy* was probably written in Verona and Ravenna.

Interspersed among the supernatural incidents of *The Divine Comedy* there are constant references to events in the poet's own life—not only to his one absorbing and inspiring passion, but also to the political conflicts and feuds in which he had been concerned.

The Divine Comedy is a description of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory. Literally, it is a vision of the state of souls after death; allegorically, it is a demonstration of man's need of spiritual illumination and guidance.

The Inferno

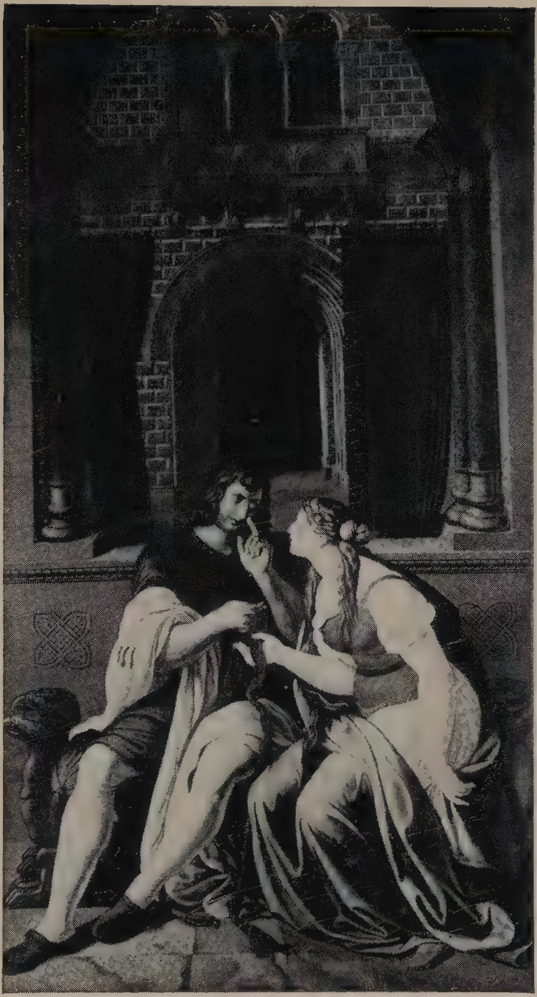
Before we take our way with Dante through the zones of Hell, there are two things to keep in mind; first, that the "Inferno" is, apart from other things, the greatest adventure-story in the world; and, secondly, that it is made alive and real with vivid, graphic *details,* like those of *Robinson Crusoe* or *Gulliver's Travels.* To exemplify the kind of thing we mean, let us take a single instance, as a type of what the reader of the poem meets at every step—an example which was used by Ruskin to illustrate the shaping power of intense imagination to body forth the forms of things unknown: "Dante's Centaur, Chiron, dividing his beard with his arrow before he can speak, is a thing no mortal would ever have *thought* of. But the real living Centaur actually trotted across Dante's brain, and he saw him do it."

Such things, of course, are lost in an epitome. But, even so, the great sights of the "Inferno" stand out like pictures, and remain in the mind's eye, an unforgettable series of stupendous scenes.

The shape of Hell is that of an enormous pit, like an inverted cone, whose point is at the centre of the earth, while its sides are occupied by broad steps or ledges, one below the other, and of course diminishing in size as they descend, the most guilty sinners being lowest down.

Dante, having lost his way in a gloomy forest, is met by Virgil, who promises to show him the punishments of Hell. Following Virgil, he comes to the gate of the Inferno, where, after having read the dreadful words that are written thereon—"All hope abandon, ye who enter here"—they both enter. Just within the entrance comes a dark plain, the vestibule of Hell, in which are the Spirits of the Selfish and the Idle, the Giddyaimless, stung by wasps and hornets, and running for ever behind a whirling flag.

Then, crossing the plain, they arrive at the River Acheron, the Stream of Sorrow. There are the crowds at Charon's ferry,



"RING OF THE NIBELUNGS."

Communication of Siegfried's secret to Brunhild. Siegfried was vulnerable between the shoulders, and when Brunhild learned this secret she was able to contrive his death.

Photo: Fredk. Hollyer.

"PAOLO AND FRANCESCA," BY ROSSETTI

Dante meets Paolo and Francesca, with other guilty lovers, in the second circle of Hell.

"staying for waftage," and the fierce old man with eyes like wheels of flame, who ferries them across. Dante falls into a trance of terror from which, being roused by a clap of thunder, he finds that they have crossed the river. Thence they descend into Limbo, the first circle of Hell. There he finds the souls of the great pagans, who, though they lived nobly, were unbaptised. Homer, Horace, Ovid, welcome Dante as one of themselves.

Coming into the second circle of Hell, Dante at the entrance beholds Minos, the Infernal Judge, an enormous man-faced dog. Here he witnesses the punishment of guilty lovers, blown like cranes upon a mighty wind.

> Now 'gin the rueful wailings to be heard.
> Now am I come where many a plaining voice
> Smites on mine ear. Into a place I came
> Where light was silent all. Bellowing there groan'd
> A noise, as of a sea in tempest torn
> By warring winds. The stormy blast of hell
> With restless fury drives the spirits on,
> Whirl'd round and dash'd amain with sore annoy.
> When they arrive before the ruinous sweep,
> There shrieks are heard, there lamentations, moans,
> And blasphemies 'gainst the good Power in heaven.

There they saw Semiramis and Cleopatra, and:

> There mark'd I Helen, for whose sake so long
> The time was fraught with evil; there the great
> Achilles, who with love fought to the end.
> Paris I saw, and Tristan; and beside,
> A thousand more he show'd me, and by name
> Pointed them out, whom love bereaved of life.

Above all, there is Francesca of Rimini and her lover Paolo, whose story he has made immortal. This story, which she tells to Dante—how they were surprised and slain together by her husband, John the Lame, a lord of Rimini—makes him faint with pity.

When he recovers he finds himself in the third circle, where the gluttons lie in mire under a continual rain of hail, snow, and filthy water, while Cerberus, the gigantic dog, barks, snarls, and rends them. At the beginning of the fourth circle he sees Plutus, god of riches, guarding the circle of the spendthrifts and the misers, who spend their time in rolling mighty crags to crash against each other; and further on, the Styx, the awful marsh in which the Sullen writhe like eels, and in whose dark waters fight the Spirits of the Angry.

> Now seeth thou, son!
> The souls of those whom anger overcame.
> This too for certain know, that underneath
> The water dwells a multitude, whose sighs
> Into these bubbles make the surface heave,
> As thine eye tells thee wheresoe'r it turn.
> Fixed in the slime, they say: "Sad once were we,
> In the sweet air made gladsome by the sun,
> Carrying a soul and lazy mist within:
> Now in these murky settlings are we sad."
> Such dolorous strain they gurgle in their throats,
> But word distinct can utter none.

They come at last to the base of a lofty tower, from which shine two signal-flames; and now they behold Phlegyas, the ferry-man of the lake, coming with angry speed to convey them to the other side. Through the grim vapour are seen glowing, red with fire, the towers and pinnacles of Satan's City of Dis. The gates are guarded by a horde of demons; upon the battlements the blood-stained Furies tear the serpents of their hair, shrieking for Medusa to turn the pilgrims into stone. A rapt, disdainful Angel, who speeds dry-footed across the lake, scatters these monsters from the pathway, and the two poets, entering the city, find a great plain rough with lidless sepulchres, each filled with fire and holding the tormented spirit of a heretic in a red-hot bed. From one of these the proud spirit of Farinata lifts his head, "looking as if he entertained great scorn of Hell."

Descending into the seventh circle, by a wild chasm of shattered rocks, they come to the river of blood, in which stand

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SIR GALAHAD

Galahad is regarded as the Knight of Purity. His principal exploit was the quest of the Holy Grail, his companions in the venture being Sir Percevale and Sir Bors. Sir Galahad was permitted to see the cup out of which Christ drank at the Last Supper. Galahad then asked to be allowed to die, and at his death the Grail was taken up to Heaven and disappeared from mortal sight.

the Tyrants, while troops of Centaurs, with Chiron at their head, gallop up and down the bank and shoot the Sinners with their arrows. Still in the seventh circle, they enter the dismal wood of the Self-murderers, whose spirits have become rough stunted trees, with poisoned fruit on which feed the Harpies, huge filthy birds with women's faces; while through this dreadful forest other spirits rush, pursued by hell-hounds. Beyond this wood lies a naked plain of fiery sand, the region of the Violent, under a slow eternal shower of flakes of fire.

Journeying along the bank of the river of blood which crosses the sand, they reach the place where the flood falls in a cataract into a gulf. Virgil, having thrown Dante's girdle into the abyss, they behold at that signal a monstrous and horrible figure coming swimming up through the dark air—it is Geryon.

"Lo! the fell monster with the deadly sting
   Who passes mountains, breaks through fenced walls
And firm embattled spears, and with his filth
Taints all the world." Thus me my guide address'd,
And beckon'd him, that he should come to shore,
Near to the stony causeway's utmost edge.
   Forthwith that image vile of Fraud appear'd,
His head and upper part exposed on land,
But laid not on the shore his bestial train.
His face the semblance of a just man's wore,
So kind and gracious was its outward cheer;
The rest was serpent all: two shaggy claws
Reach'd to the arm-pits; and the back and breast,
And either side, were painted o'er with nodes
And orbits. Colours variegated more
Not Turks nor Tartars e'er on cloth of state
With interchangeable embroidery wove,
Nor spread Arachne o'er her curious loom.
As oft-times a light skiff, moor'd to the shore,
Stands part in water, part upon the land;
Or, as where dwells the greedy German boor,
The beaver settles, watching for his prey;
So on the rim, that fenced the sand with rock,
Sat perch'd the fiend of evil. In the void

Glancing, his tail upturned its venomous fork,
With sting like scorpions arm'd.

Descending on the monster's back the poets reach the eighth circle, which is divided into ten gulfs, the place of punishment for divers kinds of Fraud. In the first are the Seducers, scourged by horned demons. In the next are the Flatterers, immersed in filth. Then come the Simonists, set head downwards in deep narrow holes, with feet that burn like lamps above the level of the rock. Then the hordes of the False Prophets, whose necks are twisted round so that they face backwards.

Next comes a dyke of boiling pitch, in which the Spirits of Embezzlers plunge and dive, watched by black-winged demons armed with prongs. This is one of the most vivid scenes in the Inferno. The chief of these hobgoblins is named Barbariccia, while under him are Graffiacane, Draghignazzo, Farfarello, and the rest of the foul crew.

As dolphins that, in sign
To mariners, heave high their arched backs,
That thence forewarn'd they may advise to save
Their threaten'd vessel; so, at intervals,
To ease the pain, his back some sinner show'd,
Then hid more nimbly than the lightning-glance.
E'en as the frogs, that of a watery moat
Stand at the brink, with the jaws only out,
Their feet and of the trunk all else conceal'd,
Thus on each part the sinners stood; but soon
As Barbariccia was at hand, so they
Drew back under the wave. I saw, and yet
My heart doth stagger, one, that waited thus,
As it befalls that oft one frog remains,
While the next springs away: and Graffiacane,
Who of the fiends was nearest, grappling seized
His clotted locks, and dragg'd him sprawling up,
That he appear'd to me an otter.

Observe the brief sharp touch which brings before the eye the body hauled out of the pitch, black, sleek, and glistening—

Photo: Fredk. Hollyer.

"PAOLO AND FRANCESCA," BY ROSSETTI

When Francesca tells Dante the story of her love for Paolo, and how the lovers were surprised and slain by her husband, John the Lame, a lord of Rimini, the poet almost faints with pity.

DANTE'S "INFERNO"

Yet in the abyss,
That Lucifer with Judas low ingulfs,
Lightly he placed us.

Canto xxxi, lines 133–5.

Judas is engulfed in the lowest part of Hell, in the centre of which Satan stands for ever.

"like an otter." Two of the demons, fighting for their prey like vultures, drop, locked together, into the seething pitch, and their fellow-goblins have to fish them out, all glued and struggling, with their prongs.

The poets leave them at the task and proceed to the succeeding chasms, where they come upon the Hypocrites weighed down by gilded cowls of lead—the Thieves, who change with agony to serpents and from serpents back to sinners—the Evil Counsellors, each a flame, dancing like strange fireflies in their gloomy gorge—the Traitors and Schismatics, rent with awful wounds, one of whom, Brian of Boru, who rebelled against Henry the Second, King of England, holds up by the hair his severed head to talk to Dante.

Thence the poets make their way to the ninth circle. The sound of a great horn, like thunder, strikes their ears, and soon they see three giants standing at the verge of the lowest pit of Hell. One of these, Antæus, sets them down upon the bottom of the gulf, which is a sea of everlasting ice, in which the forms of the tormented appear like flies in crystal. Two of these spirits are frozen in a single hole, and one of them is gnawing like a dog the other's skull. He lifts his teeth to tell his awful story. He is Ugolino, who was thrown into the Tower of Famine with his sons and left to starve to death. His story of the deaths of his two dying children is one of the most pathetic in the world. His companion in the ice is Archbishop Ruggiere, who had sent them to the Tower.

> Thus having spoke,
> Once more upon the wretched skull his teeth
> He fasten'd like a mastiff's 'gainst the bone,
> Firm and unyielding.

And so we come to the last scene of all, the lowest pit of Hell, the Judecca, so called from Judas, the place of the great Betrayers. The Arch-Traitor Satan stands for ever in the centre of it, champing three sinners in his three huge jaws, and sending forth from his vast bat-wings an icy wind that freezes all the sea. Past him, the pilgrims mount through a long steep passage:

> . . . By that hidden way
> My guide and I did enter, to return
> To the fair world; and heedless of repose
> We climb'd, he first, I following his steps,
> Till on our view the beautiful lights of heaven
> Dawn'd through a circular opening in the cave:
> Thence issuing we again beheld the stars.

Leaving the darkness and agonies behind them, they come out at last beside the Hill of Purgatory, under the quiet shining of the stars.

Unlike the conception of other mediæval writers, Dante imagined Purgatory as being in the open air. Round the steep sides of its mountain run seven circles, each of them corresponding to one of the seven deadly sins of the mediæval Church. In the lower terraces are expiated the sins of the spirit, in the fourth terrace sloth, which is a sin both of the spirit and of the flesh, and in the three uppermost terraces the sins of the flesh alone. At the beginning of each terrace instances are given of the virtue of which the sin is the opposite, and at the end of each stands an angel personifying it. Finally, when Dante and his guide have passed the last of the terraces, they enter into the Earthly Paradise where Dante sees the mystical procession representing the triumphant march of the Church, at the end of which on a chariot, amidst a hundred angels singing and scattering flowers, Beatrice appears clad in the mystical colours red, white, and green, and crowned with a wreath of olive leaves, the symbol of wisdom and of peace, over her snow-white veil. At her coming Virgil vanishes to go back to his sad dwelling in the limbo from which he came.

So the reader reaches the "Paradiso," which is the crowning glory of *The Divine Comedy*. Guided by Beatrice the poet passes through nine Heavens, which are moving spheres revolving round our globe, till he reaches the final motionless and fixed Heaven in the Empyrean. The seven lowest of the Heavens are named after the moon, the sun, and the planets, and the eighth after the fixed stars. All these are visible from earth. Above them is the ninth or crystalline Heaven, which directs by its movements the daily revolution of all the others. In it nature starts; from it proceed time and motion, together with all celestial influences for the government of the world. It is:

> The robe that with its regal folds enwraps
> The world and with the nearer breath of God
> Doth burn and quiver.

Above it, climax of the vision, is the infinite and motionless sea of divine love where God makes blessed the saints and angels in the Vision of His Essence.

The old commentators on Dante have much to say regarding his theology, his metaphysics, his use of allegory, and such matters. Just so the commentators on Virgil in the Middle Ages regarded him, not so much as a great poet as a skilled magician, from whose verses they drew oracles. Just so the early Puritans disputed whether Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress* was a sound exponent of the faith. One sage maintains that Beatrice represents the Church, another that she personifies the love of God. The lover of great poetry merely stops his ears. All such rubbish should be swept into the dustbin and forgotten. Only then can the mighty work of Dante be enjoyed as what it is, a grand and noble poem, a story of immortal joys and sorrows, which has no parallel among the works of men.

§ 6

FROISSART'S CHRONICLES

History of the Fourteenth Century

Froissart's *Chronicles of England, France, and Spain* is the outstanding example of the mediæval chronicle, which is the romance of history. Froissart was born in 1338 and spent most of his life wandering from one European court to another, picking up gossip. His chief patron was good Queen Philippa, the wife of Edward III. His chronicle is the history of the fourteenth century, and of the wars between England and France. It is written, not so much to communicate facts as, in the words of its author, "to encourage all valorous hearts and to show them honourable examples." It is also, in the next degree, a gallery of portraits; limned in their own works and words, their works rather than their words, of the right valiant princes and nobles Sir John Froissart had personally known.

Froissart cared little for the common folk; they finish unlamented by the thousand, but the death of a single knight of known prowess affects him to tears. "His history," says Sir Walter Scott,

> has less the air of a narrative than of a dramatic representation. The figures live and move before us; we not only know what they did, but learn the mode and process of the action, and the very words with which it was accompanied. . . . In Froissart, we hear the gallant knights, of whom he wrote, arrange the terms of combat and the manner of the onset; we hear the soldiers cry their war-cries; we see them strike their horses with the spur; and the liveliness of the narration hurries us along with them into the whirlwind of battle.

Perhaps the story of the Count de Foix and his son, Gaston, to whom the King of Navarre gave a little bag of powder, telling him it would reconcile his mother and father if strewn on the latter's meat, is the most terrible example in the book of the mediæval savagery, which so ruthlessly sought its ends under the glittering surface of this chivalrous society. The bag really contained a deadly poison; and the child who tried to starve himself to death, when it was accidentally discovered, died unforgiven —by yet another accident—at the hand of his father.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

"DANTE IN EXILE," BY D. PETERLIN

Gallery of Modern Art, Florence.

Dante spent the last nineteen years of his life in exile, and it was during this period that he wrote *The Divine Comedy.*

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

ADMISSION OF SIR TRISTRAM TO THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE ROUND TABLE. FROM THE FRESCO BY WILLIAM DYCE, R.A.

Palace of Westminster.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

CHAUCER AT THE COURT OF EDWARD III, BY FORD MADOX BROWN

Tate Gallery, London.

Chaucer entered the royal service soon after he was twenty, and from then until the death of the King his life was spent in diplomatic missions abroad and in attendance at court.

Froissart was translated in 1523 by a great English translator of Romance, Lord Berners, whose glittering pages "breathe the spirit and the very air of that age of infinite variety, in which the knight-errant appears side by side with the plundering adventurer, while popular uprisings sound the first note of alarm to feudal oppressors."

Philippe de Commines, minister of that astute monarch Louis XI of France, was an historian of a very different order. His book is the calm judicious record of the reign of his sovereign, who, by patient and cunning statecraft, laid the foundations of modern France.

§ 7

CHAUCER AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

The Father of English Poetry

Geoffrey Chaucer, the father of English poetry, was born in 1340. We have seen how the great Greek literature was produced after the victories of Marathon and Salamis, and the great Roman literature at the time of Rome's supreme military glory. Similarly, the first great English poetry was written, in the age of Crécy and Poitiers, in the century of the military triumphs of Edward III and the Black Prince.

Chaucer's father was a prosperous London vintner. As a young man he served with the English army in France, afterwards obtaining a small place at Court. He was a man of considerable parts, and was first promoted to a good position in the Custom House, and was later sent on diplomatic missions to France and Italy. In Italy he met the poet Petrarch, and most certainly became acquainted with the stories in Boccaccio's *Decameron.*

Petrarch and Boccaccio were the two foremost Italian writers after the death of Dante and before the Renaissance.

Petrarch wrote both in Latin and Italian. But it is through his Italian love poetry, in which he immortalised Laura, that he has an important place in literary history. Boccaccio wrote the *Decameron* between the years 1344 and 1350. He was the father of Italian prose, and his stories exactly reflect the nature of the Italian people, its grace and elegance, its naïveté, and, what is to the Northerner, its rather repellent coarseness.

Chaucer had evidently not forgotten Boccaccio's stories when he sat down to write *The Canterbury Tales,* though he attained a far greater measure of realism and humanism than his Italian contemporaries. *The Canterbury Tales* begin with a prologue in which are described a number of typical English men and women of the Middle Ages, intent on making a pilgrimage from the Tabard Inn in Southwark to the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury—the Knight, the Prioress, the Miller, the Man of Law, the Parson, the Wife of Bath, and so on. Each character is sketched with masterly skill, and the English reader feels that he is being introduced to actual men and women of his own blood, just as he does when reading Shakespeare or Dickens. There was no class feeling in Merrie England; the Knight, of the flower of chivalry, hobnobbed happily with the Miller, and the Parson with the Shipman. There is a vast difference between fourteenth and twentieth century English, and owing to this difference it is probable that Chaucer is read very little nowadays. It may therefore be worth while to quote his description of the nun who was one of the pilgrims who journeyed to the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury. The spelling and some of the words have an unfamiliar appearance, but there is no difficulty in understanding the lines, and if they are read aloud there is no chance of missing their musical cadence.

> Ther was also a Nonne, a Prioresse,
> That of hir smylyng was ful symple and coy;
> Hire gretteste ooth was but by seinté Loy,

And she was clepéd madame Eglentyne.
Ful weel she soong the servicé dyvyne,
Entuned in hir nose ful semely,
And Frenssh she spak ful faire and fetisly
After the scole of Stratford-atté-Bowe,
For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe.
At meté wel y-taught was she with-alle,
She leet no morsel from hir lippés falle,
Ne wette hir fyngrés in hir saucé depe,
Wel koude she carie a morsel and wel kepe,
Thát no drope ne fille upon hire breste;
In curteisie was set ful muchel hir leste.
Hire over-lippé wypéd she so clene,
That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene
Of grecé, when she dronken hadde hir draughte
Ful semély after hir mete she raughte,
And sikerly she was of greet desport,
And ful plesáunt and amyable of port,
And peynéd hire to countrefeté cheere
Of Court, and been estatlich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But for to speken of hire conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous
She wolde wepe, if that she saugh a mous
Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smalé houndés hadde she that she fedde
With rosted flessh, or milk and wastel breed,
But sooré wepte she if oon of hem were deed.
Or if men smoot it with a yerdé smerte;
And al was conscience and tendré herte.
Ful semyly hir wympul pynchéd was;
Hire nose tretys, hir eyen greye as glas,
Hir mouth ful smal and ther-to softe and reed,
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
It was almoost a spanné brood I trowe,
For, hardly, she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetys was hir cloke, as I was war;
Of smal coral aboute hire arm she bar
A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene,
And ther-on heng a brooch of gold ful sheene,
On which ther was first write a crownéd A,
And after *Amour vincit omnia.*

It has become a common English saying that the average Englishman can speak French after the "scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe," and this is perhaps the only common expression of modern English that dates back to the fourteenth century. Goldsmith may have taken his idea of the village clergyman, "passing rich on forty pounds a year," from Chaucer's "Poor Parson of a Town":

> He waited after no pompe and reverence,
> Ne maked him a spicéd conscience,
> But Cristes loore, and his Apostles twelve,
> He taughte, but first he folwed it hym selve.

After the Prologue, Chaucer relates the stories that each of the pilgrims tells: the Knight an old romance, the Prioress a legend of Our Lady, the Priest a ghost-story, and the Wife of Bath, a lady who had had as many husbands as the woman of Samaria, a romantic tale of Sir Gærwain and his bride. The stories are in every mood—comic and sentimental, grave and gay, and are told with immense spirit and skill.

Chaucer died in 1400. In his day educated people in England still spoke French and English, and Chaucer's great service to English literature is that his success as an English poet made it impossible for any later Englishman to write in a language not his own.

Contemporary with Chaucer were William Langland, the author of *Piers Plowman,* who was born in Oxfordshire in 1332; and John Gower, who died in 1408 and was buried in St. Saviour's Church, Southwark, and whose *Pyramus and Thisbe* was acted by Nick Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* *Piers Plowman* describes the misery of the common people caused by the ceaseless and senseless wars that ravaged Western Europe in Chaucer's century, the obverse side of the glory of the third Edward.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

FRANÇOIS VILLON

The fifteenth-century burglar who lives as a poet.

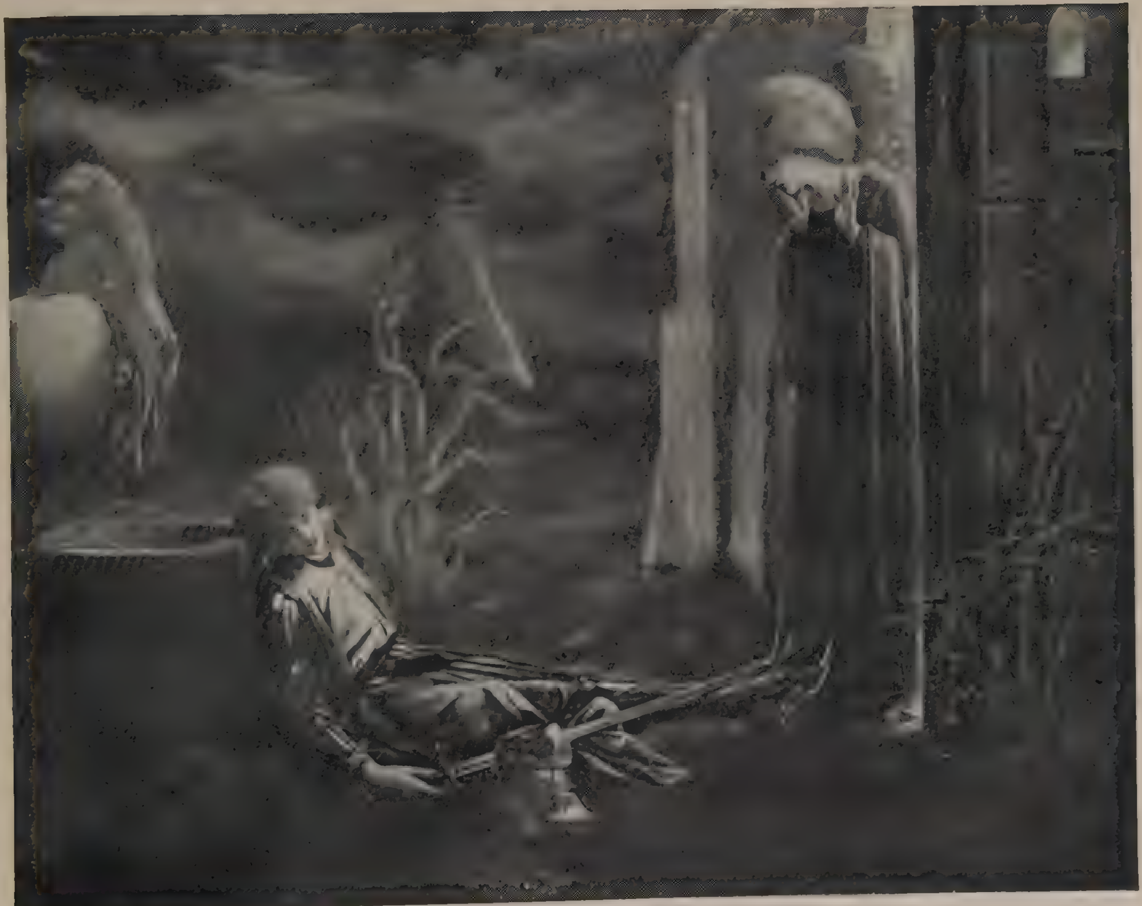

Photo: Fredk Hollyer.

"THE DREAM OF SIR LAUNCELOT," BY SIR E. BURNE-JONES

Launcelot is the most attractive and human of all the romantic figures that sat at the Round Table.

Photo: Fredk. Hollyer.

"KING ARTHUR IN AVALON," BY SIR E. BURNE-JONES

King Arthur, the perfect knight, died the victim of treachery.

§ 8

MALORY'S "MORTE D'ARTHUR"

A Translation from French Romances

During the later centuries of the Middle Ages that heralded the Renaissance, Europe was stirred to a joyous awakening, the immediate result of which was a riot of romance-writing, and by good fortune we have a book in our own language that is the sum and symbol of all this splendid activity. Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* is not exactly an original work: it was compiled in the main from French romances. These in their turn, however, had been based on ancient Celtic legends, so that in the Knights of the Round Table are to be found a company of British heroes comparable to the heroes of classic myth and of the German *Nibelungen Lied.*

That Sir Thomas Malory was more than a translator is shown in the fact that the book occupies in English literature a position infinitely higher than its French originals ever held in the literature of France. He is said to have been a Warwickshire gentleman, knighted in 1445, and a Member of Parliament, who was taken captive in the Wars of the Roses, *Le Morte d'Arthur* being partly written in prison. The book was completed by 1470. It was the last important work finished before the introduction of printing, and one of the first printed by Caxton when he set up his press at Westminster.

Le Morte d'Arthur is a collection of simply written tales about Arthur, Launcelot, Galahad, Percival, Tristram, and other great figures, their loves and adventures. The book is divided into twenty-one parts, with an infinite number of short chapters. The first part tells legends of the birth and early days of Arthur. One day there suddenly appeared in an English churchyard a huge stone, with a sword embedded in an anvil. Gold letters written on the marble declared that "Whoso pulleth out this sword from this stone and anvil is rightwise king born of all England."

Arthur had been sent home from a New Year's tournament to fetch his elder brother's sword, and thinking to save himself the long journey by calling at the churchyard and taking the sword embedded in the stone, he pulled it free and thus became King of England. His accession entailed various adventures, including a stout battle with eleven kings and a great host, against which he "did so marvellously in arms that all men had wonder."

He married the beautiful Guenever, and lived in splendid state at the city of Carleon in Wales, surrounded by hundreds of knights and beautiful ladies, patterns of valour, breeding, and grace to all the world. The bravest of the knights formed the king's immediate circle, sitting with him at the Round Table, and "pleasing him more than right great riches." From the court of Arthur these knights went forth to all parts in search of adventure—to protect women, chastise oppressors, liberate the enchanted, enchain giants and malicious dwarfs. To read of their exploits is to consort with the greatest lovers the world has known, to enter the many-towered cities of the dreamland of chivalry, "where knights and dames with new and wondrous names go singing down the street." There is the thrilling tale of Sir Gawaine and Gaheris, and how four knights fought against them and overcame them, and how at the last moment their lives were saved at the request of four ladies: the tale of Pellinore, and how a lady desired help of him, and how he fought with two knights for her and slew one of them at the first stroke: the tale of the Lady of the Lake, and how she saved King Arthur from a mantle which should have burnt him, and how another lady helped La Cote Mail Taile in his fight against a hundred knights by conniving at his escape: of Launcelot's slaughter of a knight "who distressed all ladies, and also a villain that kept the bridge": and countless others in which love is often as important as valour itself.

The life and exploits of the famous Sir Tristram are described in rich detail, in the middle part of Malory's book. Tristram learned to harp, hawk, and hunt in France, and he makes an auspicious entry into the ranks of English chivalry by taunting two knights of the Round Table until they came at him "as it had been thunder":

> And Sir Dodinas' spear brast (broke) in sunder, but Sir Tristram smote him with a more might, that he smote him clean over the horse-croup, that nigh he had broken his neck. When Sir Sagramore saw his fellow fall he marvelled what knight he might be, and he dressed his spear with all his might, and Sir Tristram against him, and they came together as the thunder, and there Sir Tristram smote Sir Sagramore a strong buffet, that he bare his horse and him to the earth, and in the falling he brake his thigh. When this was done Sir Tristram asked them: "Fair knights, will ye any more? Be there no bigger knights in the court of King Arthur?"

After this Sir Tristram had great renown in Arthur's court, for he was ever ready for a "jousting" or a private duel. No sooner had he saved Sir Palomides' life, indeed, than the two are in arms against each other. "Have remembrance of your promise," Sir Tristram says, "that ye had made with me to do battle with me this day fortnight." "I shall not fail you," says Sir Palomides, whereupon "they mounted their horses and rode away together."

With the tale of Tristram and Iseult, the love potion, and King Mark's revenge, we pass on to the Quest of the Holy Grail, or Sangrael, the dish used by Christ when He ordained the Eucharist. This sacred vessel was supposed to have been brought to Glastonbury by Joseph of Arimathea. One night while King Arthur and his court were at supper, there was a sudden thunder, and "a sunbeam more clearer by seven times than ever they saw day," so that all the knights were transfigured, and all the hall was "fulfilled with good odours, and every knight had such meats and drinks as he best loved in this world." The Holy

Grail itself had entered among them, covered with white samite. None saw it, nor who carried it. Then as swiftly it departed, and "they wist not where it became"; whereupon Sir Gavaine and the knights vowed to go in search of it. Miraculous are the happenings which follow, and in the story a new nobility is grafted on to the mingled pathos and comedy of the earlier pages.

Moving majestically by way of Sir Galahad, Sir Bors, and Sir Lionel, the narrative reaches its tragic ending, the inevitable issue of the guilty loves of Launcelot and Guenever, the wife of the King, encompassing the death of the deceived King Arthur because, for him, there was no longer "trust for to trust in. For I will into the Vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound. And if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul."

Though he sinned and was punished, Launcelot remains the ideal figure of chivalry, heightened by the devotion of the lovely Elaine, who died for unrequited love of him. Sir Ector's speech over his wasted body is perhaps the finest passage in the story:

> "Ah, Launcelot," he said, "thou wert head of all Christian knights, and now, I dare say," said Sir Ector, "thou, Sir Launcelot, there thou liest, that thou wert never matched of earthly knight's hand. And thou wert the courteoust knight that ever bare shield. And thou wert the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrad horse. And thou wert the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman. And thou wert the kindest man that ever struck with sword. And thou wert the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights. And thou wert the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies. And thou wert the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest."

We have seen how the Greek myths supplied the plots of the Athenian tragedies and were repeated by the Roman poets. We have noted how the German myths have been used by the greatest of German creative artists. Similarly the story told by Malory has inspired many English writers. Spenser's "Faerie Queen" owes much to it, and although we have no evidence that Shakespeare even read it, we know that Milton was contemplating an Arthurian epic in 1639. Tennyson, in "The Idylls of the King," Swinburne, in "Tristram of Lyonesse," Morris, in "The Defence of Guenevere" and several other poems, and Matthew Arnold in "Tristram and Iseult," were all moved to write great poetry by *Le Morte d'Arthur,* while Mr. Maurice Hewlett has drawn on it for his contemporary romances.

§ 9

FRANÇOIS VILLON, POET AND THIEF

An Anomaly

The literary history of the Middle Ages finishes with François Villon, the unlucky French poet-thief, who was born in 1431. He was a robber and a murderer, his life was spent in the vile Alsatias of Paris, he was frequently imprisoned, only escaping execution as if by a miracle, and at the end he vanished from the scene no one knows how or where. The date of his death is unrecorded, the place of his burial unknown.

Villon took the old French poetic forms, the Rondeau, the Rondel, and the Ballade, and gave them new life and new beauty. His verse is instinct with melancholy. He mocks at life, he boasts of his sins, but he writes all the time in the shadow of the gallows, and fear of the horror of death never leaves him. He seems to epitomise the pain and fear of the Middle Ages as Dante epitomises their grandeur and their ideals, and Chaucer their happy laughter.

Villon lives for us in Swinburne's beautiful poem:

> Prince of sweet songs made out of tears and fire,
> A harlot was thy nurse, a God thy sire;

Shame soiled thy song, and song assoiled thy shame
But from thy feet now death has washed the mire.
Love reads out first at head of all our quire,
Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name.

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IX

THE RENAISSANCE

THE RENAISSANCE

§ 1

THE NEW LEARNING

The Causes of the Awakening

RENAISSANCE means rebirth. The epoch of European history that is known as the Renaissance was the period of the revival of learning, with the consequent impetus to literature and art, that occurred in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. For six hundred years after the death of St. Augustine, Europe was enveloped in a mist of intellectual darkness, the ancient classic learning being preserved in only a few monasteries. The dawn came slowly, with the magnificent conception of the wonders of life to be found in Dante; with the joy of living so evident in Chaucer. With the Renaissance, the sun burst forth in fresh glory and revealed itself in the development of ideas and in new-found beauty of expression. The causes of the awakening can be only summarised here. The capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 was followed by the exodus of Greek scholars to Italy, carrying with them the knowledge of Greek literature that the west of Europe had almost entirely lost. A century earlier the Italians had learned from the Moors to make paper, and, most important of all, the first printing press was set up at Mentz in Germany, ten years before the fall of

Constantinople. In 1492 Columbus discovered America, and men began to have an entirely new idea of the world. Social, political, and religious ideas were revolutionised, and the spirit of inquiry and intellectual activity heralded the Reformation. There is no more happy coincidence in the history of the world than that the new learning and the printing press, the new way of propagating learning, came to Europe almost at the same moment.

Because of its nearness to Greece and because of its inheritance of the Roman tradition, the Renaissance began in Italy, and it was there that "man began to turn from the mediæval preoccupation with death, to raise his eyes from long dwelling on the grave, and to rejoice in the dear life of earth and the glory of this beautiful world." To quote Symonds, "Florence borrowed her light from Athens, as the moon shines with rays reflected from the sun." The Italian scholars turned their attention to rescuing the classical manuscripts from a mouldering death. Translations were made from the ancient authors of Greece and Rome, whose work had been buried in the monasteries.

The Italian Renaissance was the period of the magnificent Medicis, patrons of poets and artists, and the gorgeously reckless Borgias; of the Orsinis, the Colonnas, and the D'Estes, whose very names suggest ornate raiment, a fine and unmoral culture, and dark and mysterious intrigue; of Michael Angelo and Raphael and Da Vinci; of Ariosto and Machiavelli.

§ 2

ARIOSTO AND MACHIAVELLI

The Influence of Italian Renaissance Literature

In a brief consideration of Italian Renaissance literature, it is to Machiavelli and Ariosto that we turn in particular, though there were a legion of other writers busy in Italy during this period, whose work has genuine interest and importance. Italian

Renaissance literature influenced great English writers like Spenser, Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Milton. It was, for example, from the stories written by Matteo Bandello that Shakespeare took the plots of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Twelfth Night.*

Ariosto's famous poem "Orlando Furioso" was described by John Addington Symonds as "the purest and most perfect extant example of Renaissance poetry." It is characteristic of its age in so much as its interest is human and that it has no concern with the deity or with life beyond the grave. The mediæval world was interested in the other world. The Renaissance was interested in this world.

Lodovico Ariosto was born in 1474. When he was nineteen he entered the service of the Cardinal d'Este. He started writing the "Orlando Furioso" in 1505, and finished it ten years later. The poem gave him a great reputation in Italy, and Pope Leo X became one of the poet's patrons. After he had finished his poem, he wrote comedies in the manner of the Latin, Plautus and Terence. Towards the end of his life Ariosto was appointed governor of a province situated on the wildest heights of the Apennines. Like most poets, Ariosto was always impecunious, and the salary attached to the governorship was his reason for accepting what must have been an uncongenial office. His province was overrun with bandits, and on one occasion the poet-governor himself fell into their hands. When their leader found that his captive was the author of *Orlando Furioso,* with a fine appreciation for literature he at once apologised for the indignity that had been put on him and set him free.

The "Orlando Furioso" is a romantic poem, describing fierce contests between Christian and Pagan knights, thrilling adventures and chivalrous loves. Its theme is of the same order as the theme of the stories of King Arthur. The poem is written in a series of cantos, each canto having a prelude which acts as a link between the episodes and gives the poet opportunity for moral and patriotic reflection. "Orlando Furioso" was first translated into English by Sir John Harrington, an Elizabethan poet. Perhaps its finest passages are those in which Ariosto describes Orlando's despair and subsequent madness when he finds that Angelica, whom he loves, has been faithless to him and has married Medoro.

> I am not I, the man that erst I was,
> Orlando, he is buried and is dead.
> His most ungrateful love (ah foolish lasse!)
> Hath killed Orlando and cut off his head.
> I am his ghost that up and down must pass
> In this tormenting dell for ever led,
> To be a fearful sample and a just
> To all such fooles as put in love their trust.

In another place Ariosto describes the death of a gallant young king with appealing charm.

> See how a purple flower doth fade and die
> That by the mower's hand is lowly laid;
> O'er in the garden falls the poppy's head,
> Weighed down and broken by the stormy rain.
> Thus to the ground, upon his pallid face,
> Fell Dardinell, and thus from life he passed.
> He passed from life, and with him passed away
> The spirit and the courage of his host.

At the beginning of the poem Ariosto declares:

> Of ladies and of knights, of arms and love,
> Of courtesy and of brave deeds I sing.

And the spirit of the poem is expressed in the lines:

> But he that loves indeed remaineth fast,
> And loves and serves when life and all is past.

Although Ariosto lived in comparative poverty, his genius was acclaimed by his fellow-countrymen, to whom he was "the divine Ariosto," and it is said that his great contemporary Galileo

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

ARIOSTO

The greatest of the Italian Renaissance poets.

From the painting by Titian in the National Gallery, London.

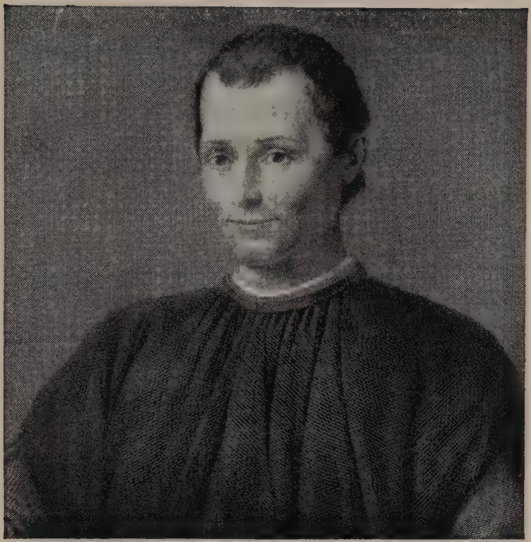


Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

MACHIAVELLI

Author of *The Prince*, and minister of Cesare Borgia.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

RABELAIS

Monk, wit, laughing philosopher. One of the three supreme figures of the Renaissance.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

CERVANTES

The author of *Don Quixote*.

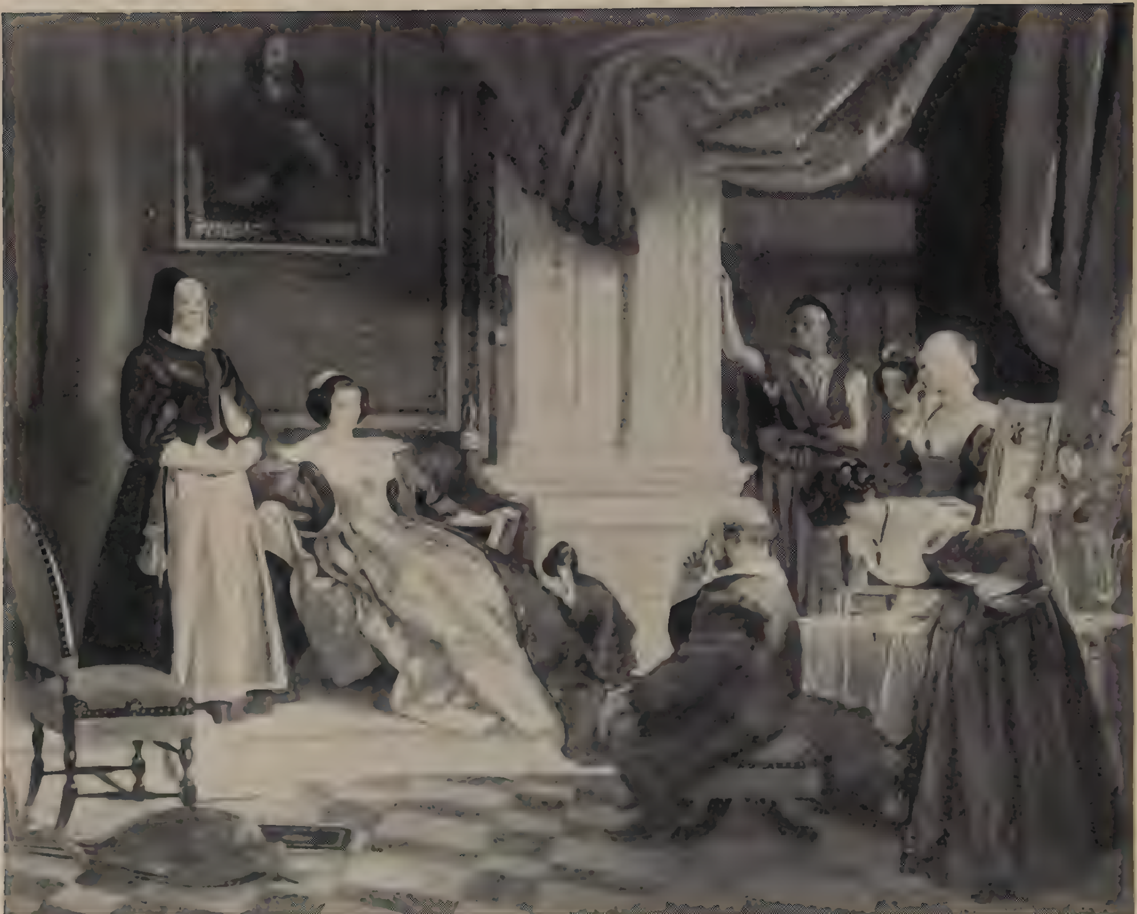


Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"SANCHO PANZA IN THE APARTMENT OF THE DUCHESS," BY C. R. LESLIE, R.A.

Tate Gallery, London.

Sancho Panza was Don Quixote's servant—foolish, dishonest, but faithful to the Knight.

knew the whole of "Orlando Furioso" by heart. It may be seen from the short quotations printed here how direct is the connection between Ariosto and Shakespeare and the other Elizabethan poets.

Nicolo Machiavelli was the most important European politician of the early Renaissance. In his *Outline of History*, Mr. H. G. Wells has well described how profoundly Machiavelli's famous book *The Prince* affected the thoughts of men and the course of human affairs.

Machiavelli was born in Florence in 1469. Before he was thirty he was appointed secretary to the governing body of the Florentine Republic. This office led to his being sent as envoy to other Italian cities, as well as to the court of Louis XII of France. His most important mission occurred in 1502, when he was sent to represent Florence with Cesare Borgia, then at the height of his insolent and magnificent power. Machiavelli told the story of this mission in a series of letters, in which he described Cesare as "a prince who governs for himself." In another place he speaks of him as "a man without compassion, rebellious to Christ, a basilisk, a hydra, deserving of the most wretched end." Yet for this picturesque monster Machiavelli conceived a considerable admiration, and in *The Prince* Cesare becomes a sort of model for other rulers to imitate. In 1512 the rule of the Medicis was restored in Florence and Machiavelli lost his official position. He was imprisoned and tortured, and afterwards retired to a small country estate, where *The Prince* was written. He died in Florence at the age of fifty-eight.

"Machiavellian" has come to mean subtle, unscrupulous craft. But the common judgment of Machiavelli is not entirely justified. He was a realist, with no great belief in either God or man, and he sets out in *The Prince* the principles of what is now generally described by the German phrase "Realpolitik," the political principles, that is, of Queen Elizabeth, Napoleon, and Bismarck. Machiavelli was not an idealist. He was concerned not with men as they ought to be, but as they are. Francis Bacon was a great admirer of *The Prince,* and he said: "We are much beholden to Machiavelli and others that wrote what men do and not what they ought to do." Hobbes, Bolingbroke, Hume, and Montesquieu were all to some extent his pupils.

The most conspicuous Italian writer of the later Renaissance period was the poet Torquato Tasso, the author of "Jerusalem Delivered," who was born in 1544 and died in 1595. Tasso was a poet of sentiment, and sentiment expressing the growing feeling for woman and music. Tasso finished his great poem when he was thirty-one. The last twenty years of his life were tragic. He became half insane, and spent his time "wandering like the world's rejected guest."

§ 3

RABELAIS AND MONTAIGNE

A Giant of the Renaissance

After Italy, the revival of literature came in France. François Rabelais, the greatest of all French Renaissance writers, was born in 1490 and died in 1553. The Frenchman Rabelais, the Spaniard Cervantes, and the Englishman Shakespeare, are without question the three giants of the Renaissance. The Renaissance was a period of intense life following a period of stagnation, an age of learning, optimism, and courage. Its spirit finds triumphant expression in the two great books of Rabelais, *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel.*

François Rabelais was born at Chinon in the province of Touraine in southern France. Very little is known about his youth, though it is said that his father was either an apothecary or an innkeeper. He took priest's orders in 1511, and for a year or two prior to that date and until 1524 he was a Franciscan monk, living in the monastery of Fontenay le Comte. Afterwards he became a Benedictine, and in 1530 he gave up his monk's habit to be a secular priest. He died on April 9, 1553. There are many legends about Rabelais's death-bed. He is said to have exclaimed: "The farce is finished" and "I am going to seek the great perhaps." But all these stories are probably apocryphal.

The Renaissance was, in a sense, a rebellion against the domination of a narrow, ignorant, monastical tyranny. Rabelais was a monk for over thirty years. He had an intimate knowledge of the abuses of the sheltered life, and he laughs at monks, and be it added, at most other people and things of his time, with whole-hearted laughter. Professor Saintsbury insists that Rabelais "neither sneers nor rages." He is a sort of sixteenth century Charles Dickens, "a humorist pure and simple, feeling often in earnest, thinking almost always in jest." *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* are hard books to read. They are extremely obscene, though really not more so than other literature of the period, and Professor Saintsbury is perfectly justified in pointing out that the coarseness is open and natural and far less revolting than "the sniggering indecency which disgraces men like Pope, like Voltaire, and like Sterne."

His book is an orgy of words written in whirling sentences. He anticipated the love of fine-sounding words of Mr. Wells's Mr. Polly. The intention of *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* is to preach the gospel of Pantagruelism, which teaches that only by humour and laughter can the world be cleaned and saved. Pantagruelism is a good and a true gospel preached by many another great man since the days of the great French laughing philosopher. As proof that Rabelais could be simple and unaffected, and that he has been grossly libelled when he has been described as nothing but a "dirty old blackguard," one may quote the following paragraphs from the description of the life of the monks and nuns in the Abbey of Theleme in the translation by Sir Thomas Urquhart:

> All their life was spent not in laws, statutes, or rules, but according to their own free will and pleasure. They rose out of their beds when they thought good; they did eat, drink, labour, sleep, when they had a mind to it, and were disposed for it. None did awake them, none did offer to constrain them to eat, drink, nor do any other thing; for so had Gargantua established it. In all their rule and strictest tie of their order there was but this one clause to be observed:—
>
> DO WHAT THOU WILT
>
> Because men that are free, well-born, well-bred, and conversant in honest companies, have naturally an instinct and spur that prompteth them unto virtuous actions, and withdraws them from vice, which is called honour. Those same men, when by base subjection and constraint they are brought under and kept down, turn aside from that noble disposition by which they were formerly inclined to virtue, to shake off and break that bond of servitude wherein they are so tyrannously enslaved; for it is agreeable with the nature of man to long after things forbidden and to desire what is denied us.

There is, in this Utopian picture, the characteristic Renaissance love of beauty and seemliness with the equally characteristic Renaissance enlightened humanism. Enough, indeed has been quoted from Rabelais to provide ample justification for the fine saying that his writing "seems to belong to the morning of the world, a time of mirth and a time of expectation."

MONTAIGNE

Montaigne wrote a generation after Rabelais. He had none of his fellow-countryman's coarseness, none of his humour, none of his tremendous enjoyment of life. When Catholic was persecuting Protestant, and Protestant was persecuting Catholic Montaigne agreed with neither and did his best to protect both.

In his essays he is garrulous, good-natured, often trivial—a very gentle philosopher.

Tolerance, kindliness, sweetness, culture are the notes of Montaigne's essays. He talks always about himself, but there is in his pages none of what Mr. Lytton Strachey has called "the tremendous introspections" of Rousseau. Montaigne was a sceptic, the agnostic of the Renaissance. "What do I know?" he continually asked. And he never found an answer quite satisfactory to himself. He was not the man to kick against the pricks, but he contrived to combine resignation with self-respect. In one of his essays he quotes an old sailor, who said: "O God, Thou wilt save me, if it be Thy will, and if Thou choosest, Thou wilt destroy me; but, however it be, I will always hold my rudder straight." That is Montaigne.

His essays are himself. When Henry III told him that he liked his books, he replied, "I am my book." It covers almost all human experience. It expresses the whole mind of a kindly man of the world. "One finds in it all that one has ever thought."

Montaigne was a Catholic. Nevertheless, "it is a peevish infirmitie, for a man to thinke himselfe so firmely grounded, as to perswade himselfe, that the contrarie may not be believed." He hated fanaticism. He hated cruelty and loathed the horrors of punishment in his day. His humanitarianism, indeed, would have been on a high level to-day:

> As for me, I could never so much as endure, without remorse and griefe, to see a poore, sillie, and innocent beast pursued and killed, which is harmlesse and void of defence, and of whom we receive no offence at all. And as it commonly hapneth, that when the Stag begins to be embost, and finds his strength to faile him, having no other remedie left him, doth yeeld and bequeath himselfe into us that pursue him, with teares suing to us for mercie,
>
> With blood from throat, and teares from eyes,
> It seemes that he for pitie cryes,

> was ever a grievous spectacle unto me. I seldom take any beast alive, but I give him his libertie. Pythagoras was wont to buy fishes of fishers, and birds of fowlers to set them free againe.

From the volume of his wisdom we select the following characteristic passages:

> *Fear.* Such as are in continuall feare to lose their goods, to be banished, or to be subdued, live in uncessant agonie and languor; and thereby often lose both their drinking, their eating, and their rest. Whereas the poore, the banished, and seely servants, live often as carelessly and as pleasantly as the other.
>
> *Constancy.* The reputation and worth of a man consisteth in his heart and will: therein consists true honour: Constancie is valour, not of armes and legs, but of minde and courage: it consisteth not in the spirit and courage of our horse, nor of our armes, but in ours.
>
> *Glory.* Of all the follies of the world, the most universall, and of most men received, is the care of reputation, and studie of glorie, to which we are so wedded, that we neglect, and cast-off riches, friends, repose, life and health (goods effectuall and substantiall) to follow that vaine image, and idlie-simple voice, which hath neither body, nor hold-fast.

For Montaigne the whole law and the prophets was summarised in the sentence: "The greatest thing of the world is for a man to know how to be his owne."

§ 4

CERVANTES

Don Quixote

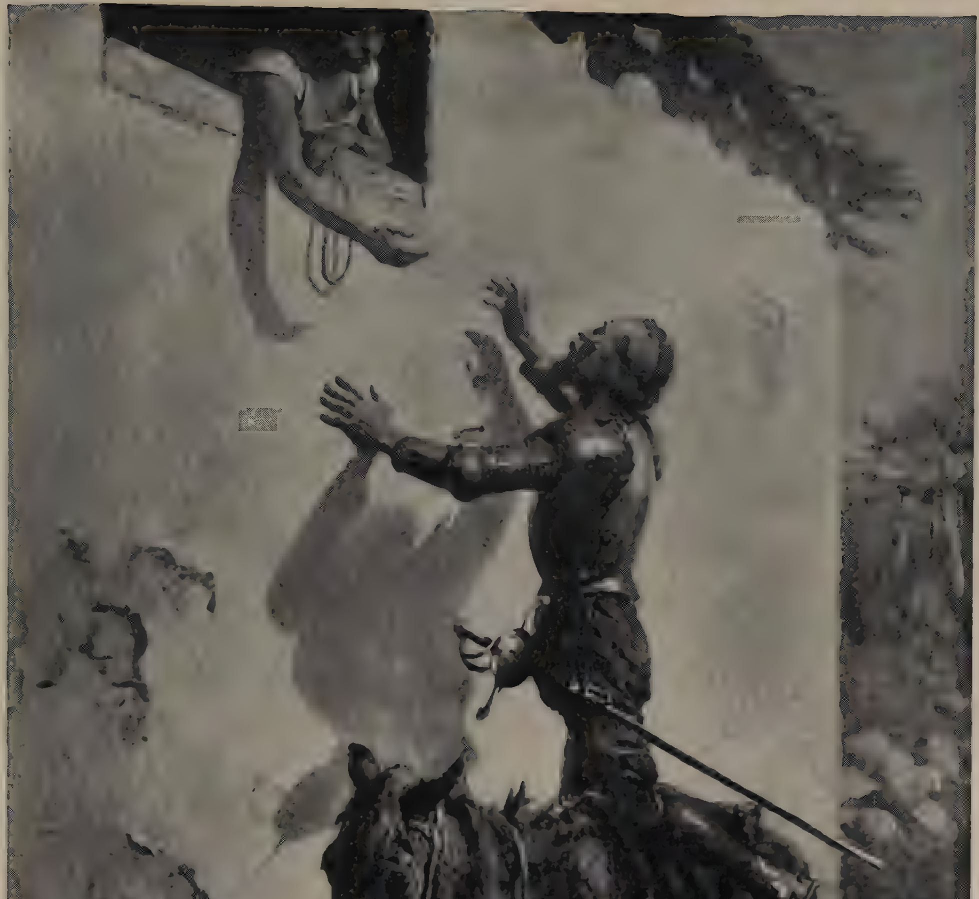
In Spain the literary glory of the Renaissance is the glory of Cervantes. Here, as in Italy and France and England, the golden age of the awakening saw the quickening of an essentially national life which found expression in a definitely national art and literature. The sixteenth century was the era of Spanish greatness. The Moors had at last been driven back to Africa, the Jews had been expelled, the Peninsula had become a united nation, made rich and famous by the prowess of her explorers and the valour of her armies. It was in this atmosphere of national glory that Velasquez painted and Cervantes wrote. Apart from the plays of Shakespeare, *Don Quixote* is the most beautiful and wonderful gift of the Renaissance to the literature of the world. And although Cervantes may have begun it with the idea of gibing at the whole idea of chivalry which, a real and human action motive in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, had become something of an absurdity in the sixteenth, his great book became much more than a mere series of gibes while it was growing under his master hand. Hazlitt has said of *Don Quixote:*

> The character of Don Quixote himself is one of the most perfect disinterestedness. He is an enthusiast of the most amiable kind; of a nature equally open, gentle, and generous; a lover of truth and justice; and one who had brooded over fine dreams of chivalry and romance, till they had robbed him of himself, and cheated his brain into a belief of their reality.
>
> There cannot be a greater mistake than to consider *Don Quixote* as a merely satirical work, or as a vulgar attempt to explode "the long-forgotten order of chivalry." There could be no need to explode what no longer existed. Besides, Cervantes himself was a man of the most sanguine and enthusiastic temperament; and even through the carved and battered figure of the knight the spirit of chivalry shines out with undiminished lustre; as if the author had half-designed to revive the example of past ages, and once more "witch the world with noble horsemanship."

Miguel de Cervantes died on the same day as Shakespeare in the year 1616. He was born in 1547, and he lived the adventurous life of a typical Spaniard of his century. He fought at the famous sea battle of Lepanto, in which Don John of Austria, with a fleet of twenty-four Spanish ships, defeated the Turks. During the battle Cervantes received three gunshot wounds, one of which permanently maimed his left hand, "for the greater glory of the right," as he himself said. Four years afterwards he was taken prisoner by the Barbary Corsairs, and was kept as a slave in Algiers until the year 1580. From that time onwards Cervantes earned an insufficient living as a writer and a petty Government official. He was always very poor. He was more than once imprisoned, and the first part of *Don Quixote* was probably written in a prison cell. This first part was published in 1605. It had an immediate success, and several pirated translations, from which, of course, the author received nothing, appeared during the next few years, both in French and in English. The second part of *Don Quixote* was published in 1615. *Don Quixote* gives the reader, as has been well said, a brilliant panorama of Spanish society as it existed during the sixteenth century. To quote Fitzmaurice Kelly:

> Nobles, knights, poets, courtly gentlemen, priests, traders, farmers, barbers, muleteers, scullions, and convicts; accomplished ladies, impassioned damsels, Moorish beauties, simple-hearted country-girls and kindly kitchen-wenches of questionable morals—all these are presented with the genial fidelity which comes of sympathetic insight. The immediate vogue of *Don Quixote* was due chiefly to its variety of incident, to its wealth of comedy bordering on farce, and perhaps, also, to its keen thrusts at eminent contemporaries; its reticent pathos, its large humanity, and its penetrating criticisms of life were less speedily appreciated.

There is the same charm in the diverse characters of *Don Quixote* as there is in the characters of *The Canterbury Tales.* And the note of the masterpiece is an understanding humanism which was not only the brightest quality of the Renaissance, but



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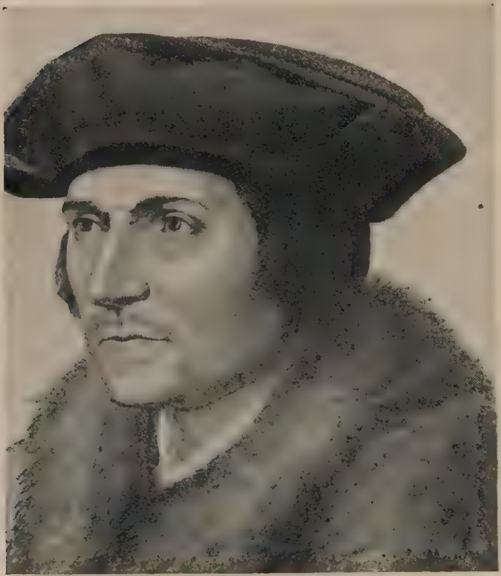
"DON QUIXOTE AND MARITORNES AT THE INN," BY ROLAND WHEELWRIGHT

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

"SPENSER READING THE 'FAERIE QUEENE' TO SIR WALTER RALEIGH," BY JOHN CLARETON

Spenser and Raleigh were two of the most splendid and chivalrous personages of Elizabeth's court. They were courtiers, soldiers, and above all, lovers of literature.



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SIR THOMAS MORE

After Holbein.

Lord Chancellor, friend of Erasmus and author of *Utopia.* More was beheaded for refusing to recognise Henry VIII as head of the Church.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

EDMUND SPENSER

Soldier and poet.

is the characteristic of all really great literature. In telling the story of *Don Quixote,* Cervantes came to laugh and remained to pray. Don Quixote himself, "nigh fifty years of age, of a hale and strong complexion, lean bodied and thin faced, an early riser, and a lover of hunting," astride his steed Rozinante, so thin that its bones "stuck out like the corners of a Spanish reel," is a figure of fun. His adoration of his Dulcinea is ridiculous. His servant Sancho Panza is a glutton and a liar. Yet long before one has read *Don Quixote* to the end the knight has become the real hero of a genuine human romance, and Cervantes has discovered, what Dickens discovered when he created Mr. Toots and Captain Cuttle, that to be weak-minded is often to be large-hearted, and that the foolish are often more worthy of admiration than the wise. The knight never fails in chivalry, and his faith is unshakable. One of the most famous incidents in the story occurs when Don Quixote couches his lance and charges a windmill. When he first caught sight of the windmills he was vastly excited.

> "Fortune," cried he, "directs our affairs better than we ourselves could have wished: look yonder, friend Sancho, there are at least thirty outrageous giants whom I intend to encounter; and, having deprived them of life, we will begin to enrich ourselves with their spoils; for they are lawful prize; and the extirpation of that cursed brood will be an acceptable service to heaven."

When the knight's lance is broken into shivers and he and his horse are hurled away, his faith remains unshaken. "That cursed necromancer Freston," he said, "has transformed these giants into windmills to deprive me of the honour of victory." The faith that can remove mountains must be a faith that can turn hard facts into thrilling romances. And only the man with a great heart ever had the audacity to tilt at windmills.

Sancho Panza, for all his gluttony and selfishness, is a good-natured and faithful servant, and it may be that when Dickens attached Sam Weller to Mr. Pickwick he had Sancho in mind. Sancho Panza is shrewd enough to see through his master, but because he can see through him he can see what is in him, and his master's great heart commands his servant's affection.

Cervantes gave the world one of its greatest and noblest figures—sanguine and enthusiastic, ennobled by his very illusions, graced with true dignity, even in the most undignified situations—always entirely lovable.

§ 5

ERASMUS AND THOMAS MORE

The Renaissance saw the two great movements which more than anything else, more even than the French Revolution, have moulded the course of European history, the Reformation and the counter-Reformation. The Reformation occurred almost immediately after the invention of printing, and it was natural that the bitter controversy between the reformers and the adherents of the old faith should have led to the publication of a vast polemical literature. Books dealing with the religious and theological difficulties of bygone generations do not make exciting reading, and cannot be regarded as of any great literary importance. One, however, of the sixteenth century theologians was a great scholar and a great writer. He was the Dutchman, Erasmus, the friend of Sir Thomas More, the author of *Utopia,* of Cardinal Wolsey, and of Dean Colet, whose enthusiasm for education and the new learning made him the founder of St. Paul's School, London. At the beginning of the Renaissance there was, perhaps, a greater enthusiasm for learning than there has been at any other time in European history, and of all the learned men in Renaissance Europe, Erasmus was notoriously the most learned. Popes, emperors, and kings conspired to do him honour.

A Voluminous Author

Erasmus was one of the last great European writers who wrote in Latin. He was a voluminous author, and perhaps to modern readers his most interesting book is *The Praise of Folly,* which was reprinted more than seven times in the course of a few months. In *The Praise of Folly* Erasmus satirises "the student for his sickly look, the grammarian for his self-satisfaction, the philosopher for his quibbling, the sportsman for his love of butchery, the superstitious for his belief in the virtue of images and shrines."

Sir Thomas More, with whose writings the Renaissance may be said to have begun in England, was born nearly a hundred years earlier than Shakespeare, and was the contemporary of Ariosto, Machiavelli, and Rabelais. More was a great lawyer (a Lord Chancellor in the reign of Henry VIII), a scholar, and a man of wide culture and appreciation. He was the intimate friend of Dean Colet, of Erasmus, and of the Dutch painter Holbein, who lived for a while in his house at Chelsea. He was a wit and a man of conscience and character, who lost great place and finally his life rather than agree to the Act of Supremacy, which made Henry VIII the supreme head of the English Church, declaring that "there are things which no Parliament can do—no Parliament can make a law that God shall not be God." It is an interesting fact that this great Renaissance scholar should have been beatified by Pope Leo XIII in 1886 and should now live in Church history as the Blessed Thomas More.

Thomas More was fascinated by the new learning in his early youth, and he was one of the first Englishmen to learn to read Greek. His famous book *Utopia,* which inspired Bacon's *The New Atlantis* and many another dream of the future, and which has given an expressive adjective to the English language, was obviously based on Plato's *Republic.* It is impossible to understand the spirit of the Renaissance unless one remembers that it was the age of the discovery of new countries, as well as of the discovery of the joy of old books; the age of great voyagers as well as of great poets. The strange new continent of America had been discovered, and it was natural for a Renaissance thinker, weary of old abuses, and longing for a more rational and more kindly society, to imagine this existence of a far-away island, a Utopia, where men should live together in happiness and content. More followed Erasmus in writing his Utopia in Latin. It was first published in 1516 at Louvain. A second edition was issued in Paris in 1517, and a third edition at Basel in 1518. The first English translation, by Ralph Robinson, was published in 1551. Mark Pattison says that in the *Utopia* More "not only denounced the ordinary vices of power, but evinced an enlightenment of sentiment which went far beyond the most statesmanlike ideas to be found among his contemporaries, pronouncing not merely for toleration, but rising even to the philosophic conception of the indifference of religious creed."

In *Utopia,* More described an imaginary island republic, the home of a people living an ideal life.

Among the other important prose writings of Renaissance England were Richard Hakluyt's *Voyages,* the literary result of the age of Drake and his fellow-adventurers, and John Lyly's *Euphues,* an example of over-coloured and highly artificial writing, fashionable at a time when men were just beginning to realise the full beauty of their own language.

§ 6

SPENSER AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

The spirit of adventure, the joy of beauty, the new knowledge of ancient Greek and Renaissance Italian poetry were the influences to which Elizabethan poetry owed its character. The Elizabethan poet was a courtier. The Virgin Queen, herself no mean scholar, was the patron of letters, and the almost idolatrous regard that poets like Edmund Spenser and Philip Sidney had for her is clearly indicated in Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* The history of modern English poetry begins years before the accession of Elizabeth with Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey, both of whom lost their lives on the scaffold during the tyranny of Henry VIII. Wyatt was the first poet to write a sonnet in the English language. In addition to sonnets, Wyatt wrote songs, madrigals, and elegies, and his pretty talent may be gathered from his "The Lover's Appeal":

And wilt thou leave me thus,
That hath given thee my heart
Never for to depart
Neither for pain nor smart:
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,
And have no more pity
Of him that loveth thee?
Alas! thy cruelty!
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!

Wyatt and his contemporary, Surrey, were the forerunners of Sidney and Spenser. Sir Philip Sidney is one of the most fascinating figures in English literary history—poet, scholar, traveller, and soldier. His *Arcadia* is a prose romance something in the manner of William Morris. His *Apology for Poetry* is an interesting apology of a poet for his art. His *Astrophel and Stella* is a series of sonnets relating the poet's own sad love story, over-coloured at times, but always sincere. Here is the first sonnet of the series:

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain,—

Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,—
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,—
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,
Studying inventions fine her wits to entertain;
Oft turning others' leaves to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful flower upon my sunburned brain.
But words came halting forth. . . .
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite.
"Fool," said my muse to me, "look in thy heart and write."

"The Faerie Queene"

Edmund Spenser, the author of "The Faery Queene,' was born in London in 1552.

Merry London, my most kindly nurse,
That to me gave this life's first native source.

He was educated at Merchant Taylor's School and Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, and while he was quite a boy he translated Petrarch into English verse. His first volume of poetry, "The Shepherd's Calendar," was published in 1579 and dedicated to Philip Sidney. In 1580 Spenser was appointed Secretary to the Lord Deputy of Ireland, and most of the rest of his life was spent in that country. He was concerned in the Elizabethan repressions, and in his *View of the State of Ireland* he elaborated a vigorous policy for bringing the Irish to heel that in after years commended itself to Cromwell. Spenser was meanly treated by the Queen, and Ben Jonson declares that he died of starvation in 1599. He was buried near Chaucer in Westminster Abbey. His great work, "The Faerie Queene," was written in Ireland. It is an elaborate series of allegories extremely difficult to understand, in which the poet set out to describe the character and training of an Englishman. The poem abounds in the manner of Ariosto with brave knights and fearsome dragons. Its value as literature depends on the charm of the verse, the variety of the imagery, and the abounding sense of beauty. Charles Lamb describes Spenser as "the poets' poet," and Milton, Dryden, Pope, and Keats have acclaimed him their master.

Although Spenser's touch is sometimes indecisive he has often vivid pictures in "The Faerie Queene"—as that of the knight peering into the den of the monster by the light of his own gleaming mail; of Fury, chained in iron, with eyes that flashed sparkles, gnawing his ruddy beard; of Mammon in his armour of rusted iron and dull gold, counting his hoard of coins; or of the little fountain in the Bower of Bliss where the golden-haired girls were bathing. Some of the most attractive writing is found in the "Epithalamion":

Wake now, my love, awake! for it is time;
The Rosy Morn long since left Tithones bed,
All ready to her silver coche to clyme;
And Phœbus gins to shew his glorious hed.
Hark! how the cheerefull birds do chaunt theyr laies
And carroll of Loves praise.
The merry Larke hir mattins sings aloft;
The Thrush replyes; the Mavis descant playes:
The Ouzell shrills; the Ruddock warbles soft;
So goodly all agree, with sweet consent,
To this dayes merriment.
Ah! my deere love, why doe ye sleepe thus long,
When meeter were that ye should now awake,
T' awayt the comming of your joyous make,
And hearken to the birds love-learned song,
The deawy leaves among!
Nor they of joy and pleasance to you sing,
That all the woods them answer, and theyr eccho ring.

. . . . .

Harke! how the Minstrils gin to shrill aloud
Their merry Musick that resounds from far,
The pipe, the tabor, and the trembling Croud.
That well agree withouten breach or jar.
But, most of all, the Damzels doe delite
When they their tymbrels smyte,

And thereunto doe daunce and carrol sweet,
That all the sences they doe ravish quite;
The whyles the boyes run up and downe the street,
Crying aloud with strong confused noyce,
As if it were one voyce,
Hymen, iö Hymen, Hymen, they do shout;
That even to the heavens theyr shouting shrill
Doth reach, and all the firmament doth fill;
To which the people standing all about,
As in approvance, doe thereto applaud,
And loud advaunce her laud;
And evermore they Hymen, Hymen sing,
That al the woods them answer, and theyr eccho ring.

Space forbids more than a passing reference to other notable Elizabethan writers. Sir Walter Raleigh, a friend of Spenser, was both man of action and man of letters, perhaps the most chivalrous figure of a chivalrous age. When Elizabeth died and James of Scotland ruled, this "tall, handsome, and bold man" was imprisoned in the Tower for thirteen years, during which time he wrote his *History of the World.* Michael Drayton—"golden-mouthed Drayton"—the friend of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, born in 1563 and living till 1631, wrote sonnets which bear comparison with those of Shakespeare himself. Drayton was a voluminous writer and some of his most charming writing is to be found in his early work, "The Shepherd's Garland." The following are the last lines from a roundelay called "Crowning the Shepherd's Queen":

From whence come all these shepherd swains,
   And love nymphs attired in green?
From gathering garlands on the plains,
   To crown our fair, the shepherd's queen.

The sun that lights the world below,
   Flocks, flowers, and brooks will witness bear;
These nymphs and shepherds all do know
   That it is she is only fair.

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